

DECEMBER

# COMMENTARY

The Common Man of the Nazis

MARTIN GREENBERG

Father Benoit: "Ambassador of the Jews"

JAMES RORTY

The Lost Chance for Full Employment

BENJAMIN GINZBURG

We Wish You Wouldn't Do That!

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My Father and Mr. Preston

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Can We Fight Prejudice Scientifically?

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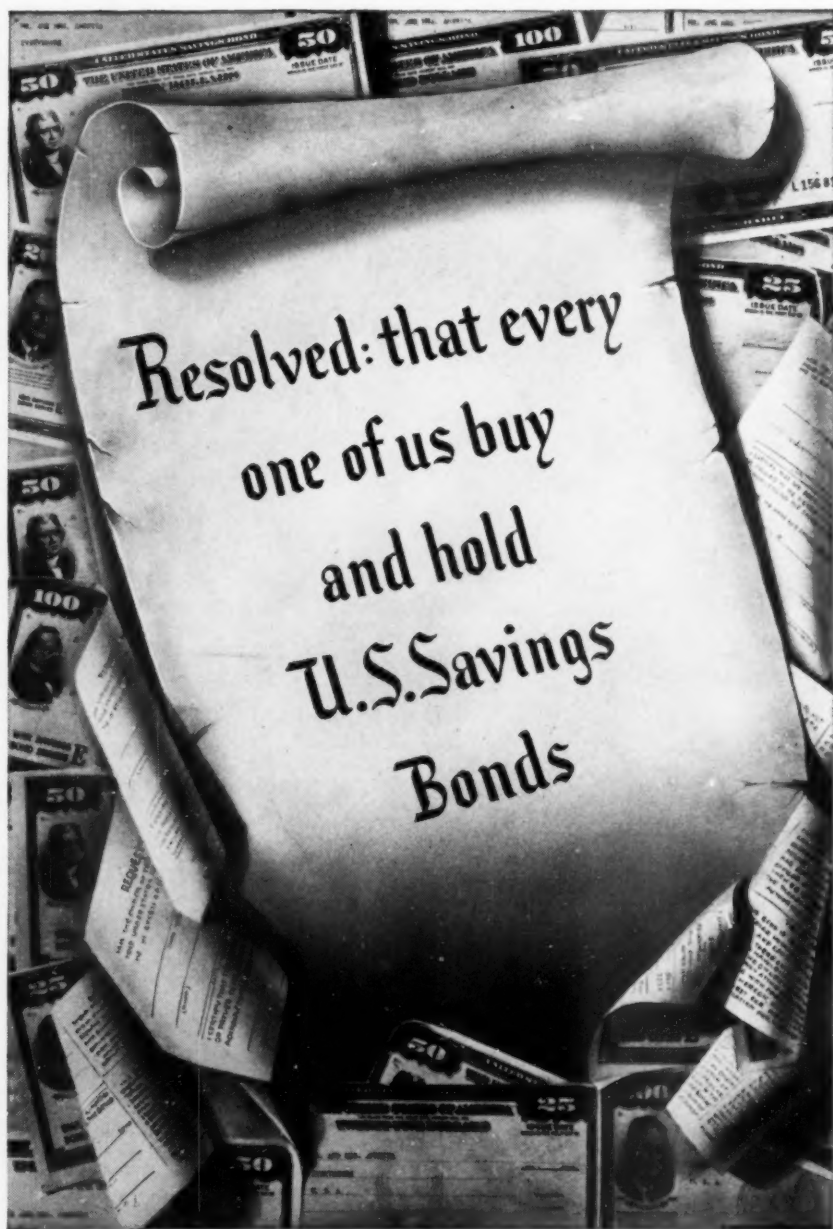
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# COMMENTARY

INCORPORATING CONTEMPORARY JEWISH RECORD

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*Ethel Rosenberg*

Uncle Julius, quite unruffled by his struggles with the BMT (in the November COMMENTARY), is back again—do him something. This time it is not Public Utilities that challenge his indomitable spirit—it is those other giants of the machine age, Government and the Film Industry.

### **Sarah E., Nazi Storm Trooper**

*Karl Frucht*

In the nightmare world of Nazi Europe, one Jewish girl found a miserable refuge in the ranks of the SS, Hitler's murder troops. By the author of "We Were a P.W.I. Team" in the January 1946 COMMENTARY.



# COMMENTARY

INCORPORATING CONTEMPORARY JEWISH RECORD

## THE COMMON MAN OF THE NAZIS

*The Adversary that "Anti-Fascism" Failed to See*

MARTIN GREENBERG

THE outbreak of the war put an end once and for all to the large but undistinguished body of anti-Nazi literature that flourished in the 30's. This literature was in its greater part directly influenced by the anti-Nazi bluster of Stalinism and the Stalinist popular front, and relied on the solidarity of the proletariat, both German and international, to bring about the downfall of Hitler. But the deployment of vast armies made it plain at last that the issue was to be settled otherwise.

Despite the fact that writers of considerable talent at one time or another contributed to it, this literature was a failure in

every respect. And not the least of all its shortcomings was its curious inability to reckon seriously with its antagonist.

In André Malraux's *Days of Wrath*, in Ernst Toller's *Pastor Hall*, in *The Seventh Cross* by Anna Seghers, as well as in a host of lesser works, there is evident a strange unwillingness to permit the Nazi to enter the foreground of the story's consideration. (In *Watch on the Rhine*, by Lillian Hellman—which takes place on the Potomac, not the Rhine—there is not a single Nazi in the cast of the characters.) Usually the Nazi is only a slightly more precise detail in a generally vague and hostile background. The locus of the action is in the heroic agony of the protagonist—his suffering and his martyrdom, seen almost as predestined. A strange veil of indifference hangs between him and the world of the enemy's personality. His purpose is to suffer and endure in a kind of deliberate isolation, at least insofar as the Nazis are concerned, fortified by his faith in ultimate proletarian redemption.

The Nazi is ignored. Or if he is not entirely ignored, the most commonplace and venal motives are attributed to him. Occasionally—but not often—an obsessive, violent, and distraught inner world is hinted at, a world new and forbidding, but this rarely

As THE facts of the Nazi horror are brought before us in stupefying detail, one is impressed more and more with the complete failure of thoughtful people throughout the world to understand, and to realize imaginatively, the nature of the late great enemy. MARTIN GREENBERG, who here discusses the deeper historical meaning of this fact as revealed in "anti-fascist" literature, served with the American Army in Germany and had ample opportunity to observe the psychological strength of Nazism among the German masses. Mr. Greenberg is an editor with Schocken Books in New York and has written reviews for COMMENTARY and *Partisan Review*. He was born in 1918 in Norfolk, Virginia, attended the New York City public schools, and was graduated from the University of Michigan in 1938.

goes beyond having the Nazi character repeat by rote—but with the fervid accents of personal belief—the official ideological nonsense of Nazism.

This disdain of the Nazi, this lack of interest in him, wears the appearance of lofty moral superiority. Actually, it is not so. It is fear and ignorance, and a deliberate turning away from the incomprehensible and fearful.

The effect of such disdain, paradoxically, was not to detract from the conception of the strength of Nazism that prevails in these books. The world of Nazi power is their context, and although the Nazi man is ignored, Nazism, omnipresent and omnipotent, dominates the scene with a massive fatality.

THE comparatively recent publication of two anti-Nazi works in German is the immediate occasion for this analysis. Bertolt Brecht's *Furcht und Elend des III. Reiches* (New York, Aurora Verlag, 1945), staged in this country as *The Private Life of the Master Race*, was written in 1938 and is an archetype of the literature of anti-Nazism. It is a dramatic spectacle in twenty-four scenes, and the whole is intended to provide a panorama of the "fear and misery" of life in every section of the Third Reich. Friedrich Torberg's *Mein Ist Die Rache* (Los Angeles, Pazifische Presse, 1943), not properly a part of this genre, but belonging to a later period, is a novelette about Jews in a German concentration camp, their gradual realization that the Nazi commandant intends their extermination as a group, and the—rather unreal—question as to whether vengeance is in their hands or in those of God.

Both Brecht and Torberg have experienced Nazism at first hand, and yet, as is invariably the case in the literary treatment of this subject, they fail to understand it imaginatively. There almost seems to be a law at work here. The more direct a writer's experience of Nazism, the less his imagination is able to comprehend it. Odets in *Till the Day I Die*, or Hollywood in a number

of movies, although far removed in space from Nazi Germany, seemed better able to cope aesthetically with the Nazis, perhaps because, protected by an ocean, they were in a position to be more curious about the Nazis and less disdainful of them—that is, less afraid of them—as human beings.

This lack of imaginative understanding is, of course, a reflection of our general bafflement in the face of the phenomenon of Nazism. Nevertheless, one always hopes that playwrights and novelists will be able to by-pass the historical problem by a direct and intuitive grasp of the living reality. Brecht's play and Torberg's novelette, like the works of the others before them, disappoint such a hope. Nazism looms up monolithic and impenetrable in their pages, an impersonal, unassailable, and absolute force. There is no hint of its inner desperation and uncertainty; there is no hint of its violent contradictions, its frustrations, and its ambiguities.

Brecht consoles himself for this secret defeatism with a kind of grim, theoretical, surface cheerfulness: he assumes a catastrophic decline of the German standard of living under the Nazis, he assumes a sullen and intransigent proletariat, and he assumes certain laws of capitalist development, all of them together spelling the ultimate doom of the Third Reich.

Where Brecht draws his comfort from the commonplaces of the routine Marxian anti-fascism of the 30's, Torberg draws a colder and more uncertain comfort from the God of Israel.

The depersonalization of the Nazi man is the literary consequence of the impersonalization of Nazism. One thinks of no literary work that successfully portrays a Nazi *person*. In almost every case he is reduced to some absolute of inhumanity and functions in the story as a mechanical and abstract figure of speech. Or if some human weaknesses are conceded him—to indicate somehow that he is human after all—they are conceived in the most banal and cliché fashion, and no serious understanding of the Nazi is accomplished.

THERE prevailed in the 30's, to be sure, a general tendency to treat character impersonally as a consequence of the schematization of imaginative literature that the influence of Marxism had brought about. Literature was made to conform to the materialist interpretation of history; life was "reduced" to a bleak and arid class struggle, and humanity was "reduced" to a bleak—but sentimentalized—proletariat. The intelligentsia unburdened itself of its self-hatred by creating the proletarian hero—that rigid and lifeless figure whose every attribute implied a contemptuous dismissal of the "classless" and "disinterested" concerns of the intellectuals. It is amazing even to this day how negative and abstract was the literary conception of the worker, and how completely false. (Is this evidence of the restricted and doctrinal character of Marxism, and its inability to create a really universal attitude, heralding a new humanity and a new period in history? Does not socialism here have the suspicious appearance of a radical theory of the propertyless late middle class rather than of a tremendous social force destined to change the world?)

With the triumph of Hitler and the approach of the war, proletarian literature looked towards the international scene and transformed itself into "anti-fascist" literature. It was still the old morality literature, but one in which the Nazi conveniently played the role of the Devil, a role hitherto imperfectly fulfilled by "capitalist society."

THE conversion of the Nazi into an abstraction is more surprising in Brecht's case. The Brecht who in the *Dreigroschenoper* was able to penetrate the essence of the big-city, industrial Common Man of capitalism with so exact an irony is here able to create only blank horrors, and this despite the fact that the Nazi Common Man was equally a child of the megalopolitan jungle Brecht knows so well.

One reason, perhaps, that Brecht's old irony failed to work against the Nazis is that it was an irony aimed at urban and capitalist society—and the Nazis professed to be anti-

capitalist, too, outdoing the Marxists, moreover, in condemning the perversions and degradations of modern urban life. The ideal human being in whose name they opposed the city was not the same ideal that the Marxists asserted—it was not the clear-eyed, square-hewn workingman of the city. It was the stolid, "wholesome," old-fashioned, rural petty-bourgeois. And here, precisely, was where pro-socialist propaganda fell into one of its subtlest, yet most damaging, ambiguities. Marx established as one of socialism's prime tasks the obliteration of the differences between town and country; yet socialism's whole quality has remained urban. The very word "socialism" summons up a vision of enormous vistas of shining concrete pavement and smoking factory-chimneys, of huge and smiling throngs of people passing by parks and cinemas—the décor of the rationalized megalopolis. Socialism came to be the world of large suburbs and long vacations. It came to represent a world new, mechanical, ingenious, full of "improvements." Socialism became Europe's version of an America purged of its imperfections.

The masses, however, have never been entirely urbanized. (The only entirely urbanized group in modern society is the Jews, whose metropolitan competence has always aroused the resentment of the Gentiles.) The memory of the countryside—from which they came originally—persists in the masses, together with a sentimental nostalgia for what now seems the stable, organic, and reasonably secure—if highly limited and somewhat boring—life they led there. This insipid nostalgia, this sentimentalization of rural life, has become one of the myths of urbanism. It is the plebeian version of the aristocratic Arcadia. The Nazis took advantage of this nostalgia in their attacks on modern industrial life, counterposing to the urban tradition of capitalism and socialism their rural ideal.

However, the human type the Nazis actually realized puzzled the anti-Nazis in a way that the merely reactionary Nazi rural ideal did not. Nazism succeeded in intimidating the world by more means than those

of power politics and militarism. It reshaped the image of the masses into something inscrutable, threatening, and profoundly alien to traditional Western intelligence, so that it defied even the efforts of the artistic intelligence to assimilate it imaginatively.

**I**t is the ordinary Nazi man, the mass man of the Nazi organizations, that constitutes the core of horror in the enigma of Nazism. The modern world expected the masses either to continue to suffer in traditional fashion, that is, to continue to exist at the sub-human level of life that generations of poverty impose, without ideas, without spirit, and without independence; or to become socialist, that is, to revolt against themselves, to revolt against the conditions of their existence and the limited type of humanity that such an existence thrusts upon them, in the interests of a superior and universal conception of humanity. Nazism, however, linked the spiritual poverty of the one role with the revolutionary dynamism of the other.

Hitler armed the German masses with a theory. Whereas socialism—and, indeed, all genuinely revolutionary mass movements—gave the masses a theory with which to transcend themselves, Nazism gave them a theory—racism—to confirm them in their mass nature. Their present spiritual status was given the primordial sanction of blood, and elevated to an eternal ideal. Within Germany, the racial class struggle replaced the economic class struggle, and the German masses, rather than striving to overcome their purely mass nature, strove to be purely German, i.e., they strove to realize more absolutely their present, mass self. In propagating the racial class struggle, Nazism made use of the revolutionary rhetoric of socialism so that it could masquerade as a revolution of the masses, and it further developed the masquerade by thrusting the economic class struggle outside the borders of the Reich into the realm of international power politics ("proletarian" vs. "capitalist" nations).

Once the power of the Nazi party was firmly established, it turned outside the bor-

ders of its country in classic German fashion to solve in an imperfect and debased fashion the problems that it could not solve at home. The national unification that Germany was never able to achieve by itself, it achieved belatedly in 1870 in a war against the French. It needed the First World War to accomplish—imperfectly—the democratic revolution it was unable to accomplish in 1848. And, finally, Germany needed the Nazi party and the Second World War to realize a corrupt and barbarous version of the socialist revolution that it had failed to achieve after 1918.

Nazism, from this point of view, is "kitsch" politics, and fully in the German political tradition. It wanted the emotional effect of a mass revolution without being able to summon up the inner historical strength that a mass revolution demands. The Nazis wanted the sensation of history without the risk and inner effort demanded by history.

For surely it is the case that Germany, the home of that Faustian spirit which worships most ardently at the altar of History, felt most grievously the lack of a history of its own. Germany never experienced an authentic Bastille Day, and the absence of such a historical experience condemned it to psychological and political immaturity, and to a political role in Europe incommensurate with its real strength. Nazism represents Germany's last desperate effort to dominate Europe without itself first submitting to the necessity of a democratic revolution.

In this last effort, Germany placed its fortunes in the hands of the plebs. The plebs, in the person of the Nazi party, was given political power in the hope that the masses might accomplish the conquest of Europe that the German ruling class was never able to accomplish on its own initiative.

Nazism is therefore political plebeianism—the attempt of the mob, armed with political power and a philosophy, to play a significant role in history. Incapable of accomplishing that other revolution which remains its country's only means of creating a real history, the German plebs poured all



the frustrated passion of Germany's historical disappointment into an ersatz revolution against the Jews and the outside world. Who better than Hitler represents the passionate nothingness that is the political plebeian? Vulgar, ignorant, shrewd, brutal, and *empty*—that is the nature of the mass man, and he brings all these qualities with him into history on the rare occasion when his envious fanaticism is permitted to discover a purpose for itself, to patch together a theory out of its void, and to organize in its own image and its own right.

**I**N NO age have the "masses" made history. The mass, as mass, in an historical sense is literally nothing—the historical empty space in which events occur. In pre-history they did not exist—there were only families and tribes. In ancient civilizations they were almost completely ignored; the masses were simply a part of nature. When Roman society began to disintegrate, the threat that lay in the dead weight of the Roman masses finally won them a particular consideration—bread and circuses, the appropriate symbol of their spiritual and historical insufficiency. Under Christianity they were admitted into the human community, but their special nature was dissolved in the grandiose category of Christian humanity.

The various peasant revolts that have taken place in the history of Europe illustrate best of all the historical impotence of the masses. Many of these revolts achieved considerable initial success and conquered large reaches of territory but, unable to maintain themselves, were eventually put down, and events resumed their interrupted course almost as if nothing had happened. The peasants were unable to create or acquire an *idea* with which to challenge the idea of feudalism. They were unable, that is, to make history.

The West discovered the masses out of the same impulse that discovered America, and was amazed and repelled by their strangeness. Shakespeare's rude plebeians and ignorant mechanics are above all *curiosities* in their author's eyes. Shakespeare

observes them with some of the same wonder with which Columbus observed the West Indian savages.

In our own day, the masses were observed minutely, and the horror of their lives was understood. They were understood, however, in their passive and suffering aspect, and they acquired real humanity and influenced history only insofar as they transcended the limitations of their mass nature in the revolutionary struggles for justice carried on by the egalitarian movements.

Under Nazism, the German masses abandoned this struggle for justice—and thus their humanity—without abandoning their resentful aggressiveness. In the place of the ideal of Socialist Man they substituted the Fanatic Plebeian. The plebeian *with an idea*—this is the creature that Brecht, Torberg, and the rest cannot understand. This is that "rough beast," that "shape with lion body and the head of a man" who, conceived in a time when "the best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of a passionate intensity . . . slouches towards Bethlehem to be born."

**I**N BRECHT, Malraux, Seghers, Toller, and Odets, the proletarian masses are counted on to destroy the power of the Nazis. When the course of events proved this expectation vain, this type of literature ceased to be written. In *Watch on the Rhine* (1941) already, there is no longer any talk of proletarian action. The hero is unpolitical—neither a Communist, Socialist, nor radical intellectual; he is simply an "anti-fascist" who was once an engineer. He returns to Germany at the end of the play to carry on the fight, but the fight is no longer the fight to rally the dispossessed (the Nazis had already done that), it is the guerilla foray of an isolated individual. (Miss Hellman's sentimentalities are more hard-headed than her predecessors—one has the right to expect that her hero later made contact with the O.S.S., served it well, and is now at least a technical adviser to the Allied Military Government.) In the case of Torberg, God replaces the proletariat. The genre of anti-



Nazi literature is pretty well used up. The literature of "anti-fascism" had never been a literature of real struggle; now more than ever it becomes merely a literature of passivity.

Even while abandoning their faith in the masses, few of these writers suspected to what extent the envious and illiterate *Lumpenintellektuellen* had succeeded in creating a new type of mass man. The popular masses that had provided the great revolutions of the West with their social force had at last been halted in their progress towards universal democracy and a classless society. Whereas in France, England, and to a certain extent in America, where democratic revolutions had successfully taken place, this represented the *exhaustion* of a historical role, at least for a certain period, in Germany it represented the *frustration* of that role. The German masses, desperate in their necessity to act, and yet inwardly crippled by the long history of German political failure, squandered their energies on the gutter socialism of Hitler.

THE sentimental plebeianism of the anti-Nazi writers blinded them to the aggressive plebeianism of the Nazis. Only the idea of socialism had united them with the masses, from whom they were otherwise entirely alienated. The failure of this idea severed the connection, and these writers have since then relapsed into an unenlightened disenchantment.

They, together with the entire anti-Nazi world, made the mistake of considering the

Nazis merely reactionary. They failed to perceive—and did not wish to perceive—the significance of the fact that the Nazis had become the first to challenge traditional socialism's hold upon the masses. In the end the Nazi armies were defeated, not however by the embattled working class fighting in the name of humanity, not by the *enemies* of the Nazis, but by the mechanical and unenthusiastic mass armies of their *opponents*.

In the disintegration of Europe, in the utter collapse of all historical purpose, the void rose up in a frustrated and perverted effort to realize itself. The vision of doom that had secretly haunted the 19th century at last became reality. This reality the anti-Nazi writers persisted in ignoring. It is not so much their wrong politics that one finds most offensive—we can all be convicted of the same thing—it is not even their bad writing and false heroics. What is most appalling is their betrayal of the private vision of the artist. We do not demand of the artist that he be wiser than we are; we demand a simple kind of honesty that keeps him close and loyal to his intuitions. What is amazing in this literature is the complete absence of any intuitive sense of the quality of our age. One line of the poetry of Yeats, whom most of the anti-Nazi writers would consider "unenlightened"—although a good "private" poet—is weighted down with more reality than the whole body of anti-Nazi literature. An ultimate kind of corruption took place, and more talent than one generation can afford to waste was wasted.

## FATHER BENOIT: "AMBASSADOR OF THE JEWS"

### *An Untold Chapter of the Underground*

JAMES RORTY

**T**HE time, October 1943. Italy was out of the war, but the Germans were rapidly taking over in Rome and elsewhere, and veteran Nazi divisions had halted the parade of the American and British forces up the Italian peninsula.

Southern France, refuge of tens of thousands of Jews from Germany, Poland, Greece, and Hungary, was being evacuated by the Italian troops, while close on their heels, like a pack of bloodthirsty ferrets, came the German SS and the Gestapo.

From the point of view of the French and Italian underground movements, the Italian surrender had its unfortunate aspects. Popular Italian sabotage of the almost universally detested German "partner" had become a major reliance of the underground, and indeed, of allied strategy; now the effectiveness of this sabotage would be greatly curtailed.

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A FEW stories of heroic efforts to save Jewish lives in Nazi Europe shine in the moral blackness of the war years; one such story is told here by JAMES RORTY, veteran journalist, who has crusaded for civil liberties and larger human opportunities most of his life. Mr. Rorty first heard of Father Benoit from a friend on the Jewish Labor Committee; more information came from Benoit's lieutenants, Formanski and Wajc, interned at Oswego, and from the information services of the occupied countries; finally, an inquiry addressed to Jacques Maritain, French Ambassador to the Vatican and a world-famous Catholic intellectual, brought a large mass of material, including unpublished letters and documents and a memoir by Benoit himself. Mr. Rorty has asked COMMENTARY to send his author's fee for this article to Father Benoit for the continuation of his work among the Jews of Europe. Mr. Rorty was born in Middletown, New York in 1890. He has written a number of books, and contributed the article "American Fuehrer in Dress Rehearsal" to the November 1945 COMMENTARY.

During the first weeks of September, four ships pledged by Mussolini's government before its fall were to have begun the transportation of 30,000 Jews from Nice to North Africa. This long-brewed scheme, initiated by the Italian banker Angelo Donati, included at one time a project for the exchange of Italian prisoners for British and Americans; it involved the active participation of the British and American authorities, had been informally discussed with the Vatican, and was to have been financed by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

The surrender aborted this grandiose plan, and from Marseilles to Rome, the taut fabric of the underground quivered and groaned. On September 7—the day before the secretly signed surrender of Badoglio was officially announced—the Germans moved to take over the whole of France. For the refugees, and especially for the Jews concentrated in the south of France, there was now no safety but in flight. Desperate parties of men, women, and children struggled on foot through the Alpine passes. Some fell into traps set by the eagerly waiting Gestapo. Others got through. . . .

**B**ACK and forth before a side gate in the high wall that surrounds the Holy City marched a squad of Swiss Guards, as a squad of Swiss Guards has been marching for centuries, ever since the pontificate of Julius II, who had had Michelangelo design their magnificent medieval costumes. From the hurrying crowds, a small, nondescript figure detached itself, started to cross the square, then timidly retreated. Was this it, he wondered? The synagogues in Rome were closed, as were most of the synagogues of Europe. Instead he might find help, so

he had vaguely heard, inside those high walls, where the *goyim* had preserved what was left of sanctuary in a world that had become unbearable.

A passer-by stared and shrugged. The little man froze like a frightened animal; then with sudden resolution, he hurried across the square and planted himself before one of the six-foot guards.

"*Je suis juif de France*," he stated firmly. "*Je demande—*"

"Fool!" whispered the giant. His eyes rolled. His thumb gestured. "*159 Via Siciliano. Vitel!*"

159 Via Siciliano was and is the address of the College International St. Laurent de Brindes des FF MM Capucins, where Father P. Marie-Benoit, peasant-born French priest, professor of theology, Hebrew scholar, and one-time director of the largest passport factory in Europe, was and is a respected member of the faculty.

**B**ORN in 1895 in the little village of Bourg d'Iré, Maine-et-Loire, the eldest son of the local miller, Pierre Peteul began his novitiate in 1913 at Breust Eysden in Holland, where he took the name of his uncle, Marie-Benoit. His studies were interrupted by World War I, in which he served five years. Wounded at Verdun, he received five Croix de Guerre citations and the Médaille Militaire.

For services even more extraordinary in World War II, both to his country and to humanity, Father Benoit has thus far to my knowledge received no medals, only the unqualified admiration and gratitude of thousands of Jews who are convinced, not without reason, that they owe him their lives. To this may well be added the gratitude of the Christian world, whose highest traditions he defended through five years of labor, hardship, and danger.

Following World War I, Father Benoit returned to Breust for a year, and then went to the Capuchin College in Rome. In 1925 he received his doctorate in theology from the Gregorian University.

Seemingly Father Benoit's early interest

in Judaism and in the problems of European Jews stemmed from his Hebraic studies, which won for him, before he was thirty, high recognition among scholars. In 1927 he joined a French organization known as "*Les Amis d'Israel*." His interest in Jewish problems survived the demise of this short-lived organization, although during the interval between wars his career was a quiet one, divided between teaching and his service as an ordained priest.

At the outbreak of World War II, he was mobilized and served briefly as an interpreter. Shortly before the fall of France, he returned to Rome, and soon after, because of Italy's entrance into the war, moved to Marseilles. There he immediately became active in the resistance movement, and his earlier interest in Jewish problems made him a willing and effective collaborator with Jewish committees in the efforts exerted in behalf of French and foreign Jews, who were endangered by the implacability of the Gestapo and the pliancy of the Vichy government. In Marseilles the Capuchin convent at 51 Rue Croix-de-Regnier became one of the principal headquarters of this effort, which involved the lodging and feeding of refugees.

**F**ATHER Benoit also built up an efficient organization for smuggling Jewish and other anti-Nazi refugees into Spain and Switzerland. The Maison des Dames de Sion in Marseilles was always full of these refugees, a fact which the Gestapo soon came to suspect. Father Benoit was himself under constant surveillance—and as constantly warned by his faithful friends among the police. Eventually, as was to have been expected, one of his protégés was captured by the Gestapo while trying to cross the Spanish frontier and tortured into revealing Benoit's part in the smuggling operations. After that the priest was likely to have visitors from the Gestapo at any hour of the day or night. This was inconvenient because increasing numbers of refugees escaped from nearby internment camps had also formed the habit of arriving at the

priest's apartment in the convent at all hours.

Fortunately, as Father Benoit has testified, "the Italian occupation authorities in Marseilles had adopted a very humane policy toward the Jews." They even went so far as to accept the nomination of Father Benoit by the Bishop of Marseilles to serve as official visitor at the two principal internment centers in the city. This privileged position enabled him to deliver and take all kinds of clandestine messages.

"Little by little," writes Father Benoit, "I began to collaborate with the Jewish organizations in Nice and Cannes. Every Sunday evening, accompanied by my secretary, a French Jew, I would take the train for Nice and Cannes and there I would remain until the following Wednesday, transacting current business with the UGIF (Union Générale des Israélites de France) and the synagogue on the Boulevard Dubouchage. The Jesuit Father Bremont devoted himself completely to our cause, despite his great age. . . ."

It was Father Bremont who introduced Benoit to Angelo Donati, director of the French-Italian Banque de Crédit in Nice, who is described by Benoit as "a personality of major stature, a man of great intelligence and courage, whose service to his coreligionists cannot be too much praised."

With Donati and Lo Spinoso, who represented the Italian authorities, Benoit elaborated the plan already mentioned to transport 30,000 refugee Jews to North Africa. To consummate this undertaking it would be necessary to interest either Mussolini or his Minister of Foreign Affairs, and to this end, at the urgency of Donati, Benoit engaged himself to seek an audience with the Pope. (It was perhaps not entirely coincidental that at this time Benoit's operations in Marseilles were being increasingly handicapped by the surveillance of the Gestapo, and that he had been summoned to Rome by his superiors.)

Before leaving for Italy Benoit had detailed conversations with the representatives of the consistory at Lyons, among whom he names Rabbis Isaïe Schwartz and Jacob Kap-

lan, Rabbi Leo Berman of Lille, Rabbi René Hirschler of Strasbourg, Rabbi Salzer of Marseilles, Raoul Lambert, President of the UGIF, and Edmond Fleg of the Eclaireurs Israélites.

**O**N JULY 16 Father Benoit was presented to the Pope by his superior-general. After presenting various items of information which it had not been possible to transmit through the usual channels, he pointed out to the Holy Father that the Italians were progressively retiring from southern France, and that the Germans were already in the vicinity of Nice, endangering the eight or ten thousand Jews in hiding there. What would happen to them, and to another twenty thousand Jews in southern France who would seek refuge in Italy when and if the Germans took over entirely?

Father Benoit then explained the Donati scheme in detail and the agreements in principle that had been reached with the British and American authorities. Would His Holiness instruct the representatives of the Vatican in London and Washington to give their active support to the project? Would he permit Father Benoit to present Donati to the Papal Secretary of State so that the latter might discuss the matter more directly with the Italian authorities?

Evidently the Pope must have responded favorably to this request because on August 7, Donati wrote Father Benoit as follows:

"I returned yesterday to Nice and found your postcard waiting for me at San Remo, for which thanks.

"In view of the great interest the Holy Father manifested in your audience with him with respect to the important question of the possible entrance of a certain number of Jews into Italy, I should inform you that the delegation from Nice has discussed the matter officially with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I am well aware of the noble sentiments of S. S. Guariglia and I know also in what high esteem he is held by His Holiness. I do not thank you, because I know that you have accomplished this Christian mission without asking for my



gratitude or that of my co-religionists. . . ."

Two weeks later, on August 24, Donati wrote Benoit that the official authorization for the transfer of the refugees from Nice to North Africa was on the way. Would he please communicate this fact to the "neighbor of Monsignor Hérissé"?

Conspiratorial language of this sort appears occasionally in the correspondence. Monsignor Hérissé was a French priest, a lively octogenarian with no liking for the Nazis, who resided at Sainte Marthe, which was inside the Vatican, hence not subject to the visits of the Gestapo. The British and American ambassadors also lived in Sainte Marthe. The "neighbor" referred to was presumably Lord Reading, to whom we find Benoit writing from Lisbon on September 8—too late, for the Italian surrender was announced the same day—asking that he intercede with his government to hasten the North African transfer.

Shortly before this Benoit had brought to fruition a closely related project: that of opening the Spanish frontier to the passage of Spanish Jews—or Jews possessing credentials attesting to their Spanish nationality. In this connection a letter from Cardinal Maglione, the Papal Secretary of State, dated September 2, quotes a formal agreement wrung from the Spanish authorities to permit the entrance of all Spanish Jews regardless of their political tendencies. In case of doubt regarding the authenticity of the refugee's papers—so reads this stately document—final decision would rest in the impartial hands of—the Reverend Father Marie-Benoit of Bourg d'Iré.

To cap this, Cardinal Maglione adds that he has been assured by Monsignor Cicognani that "at the request of the Holy See and in conformity with the sentiments of the Spanish government, the requirements set forth in this agreement by the Minister will be interpreted with ample generosity. . . ."

Not the least heroic aspect of Father Benoit's performance was his ability to play this elaborate diplomatic farce, at once grim and hilarious, with steadfast gravity.

THE deposition of Mussolini by the Fascist Grand Council, which occurred on July 24, shortly after the Allied landing in Sicily, was helpful rather than otherwise to the plans of Donati, Benoit, and their associates; the Badoglio government was even more eager to facilitate the North African transfer than had been Mussolini. The Italian attitude is easy to understand. The war was going against the Nazis. Moreover, anti-Semitism had no popular roots in Italy, and the mounting Italian hatred of the Nazis tended to express itself in a repudiation of the racist legislation which Nazi pressure had put on the statute books. Unable to abrogate these laws, the Italian authorities suspended their operation and in other ways tried to ameliorate the situation of the Jews wherever the Italian forces were in command, as in the Balkans, North Africa, and southern France. In Greece, the Italians moved to Athens a substantial part of the Jewish population that had been caught in the zone occupied by the Germans, thus saving many who would have been deported from Salonika.

Actions of this sort invariably provoked German protests. Moreover, the sheer physical difficulty and expense of lodging and feeding thousands of refugees constituted an important aspect of the problem. These difficulties were being daily increased by the passage across the French-Italian border, in advance of the imminent German occupation of southern France, of a widening stream of Jews and other anti-Nazi refugees. While Mussolini, and after him, Badoglio, were willing discreetly to assist this migration, they were even more eager to relieve the intolerable congestion of people and problems in northern Italy by hastening the projected North African transfer.

By September 1 the preparations were complete to the last detail for the North African transfer. The Italian government had agreed to make available four ships, the "Duilio," "Guilio Caesar," "Saturnia," and "Vulcania." In three voyages from Nice—to Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria—these ships were scheduled to transport about



30,000 of an estimated 50,000 Jews awaiting passage. Financing of the project had been assured by the JDC.

Conceivably, the ships could have sailed as late as September 3, when the military armistice providing for unconditional surrender of the Italian armed forces was signed secretly in Sicily. But the announcement of the surrender on September 8, as Benoit testifies in his memoir, scotched the whole project, at the same time touching off a frantic scramble of Jews and other refugees across the Alps into northern Italy.

**A**MONG the survivors of that terrible exodus was Icek Wajc, later to become one of Benoit's trusted lieutenants in the Rome underground. Wajc was born in Poland in 1898, and for twenty years before the war had been a prosperous wholesale leather merchant in Paris. A modest man and a gentle one, Wajc is almost the last person Hollywood would choose to play in its cloak-and-dagger melodramas. After 1933, as the destitute refugees from Hitler's Reich came pouring into Paris, he gave somewhat more than the help that was asked of him, to Jews and non-Jews alike. When the Nazis occupied Paris, Wajc's three sisters and two brothers were deported to Germany and were never heard from again.

The Italian surrender found Wajc in the village of St. Gervais near the Italian border. With Aba Formanski, representative of the Jewish Coordinating Committee, and other underground leaders, he shared responsibility for evacuating over 1000 Jews from this area. All those under twenty-five were offered the choice of crossing the mountains into Italy or going to Spain or Belgium as maquis. Ninety per cent—practically all the able-bodied ones between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five—chose the latter course. The very old and the women who were pregnant had to be left behind. The others, under the leadership of Wajc, made the trip through a high pass in the Maritime Alps early in October. One member of the party was a woman of eighty; another was a man on crutches. On the

third day of this desperate journey, all were so weak that they threw away their rucksacks. Two died en route. The others staggered down into the valley on the Italian side, only to find the Gestapo already there and expecting them.

Over 400 were captured, deported to Poland, and presumably gassed. A scattered few escaped and headed for Rome. Already a new address was stenciled on the minds of these and other refugees who escaped into Italy at this time: 159 Via Siciliano. There in the Capuchin convent, in the shadow of the Vatican and under its protection, a new center of resistance was forming around Benoit, now beginning the most difficult phase of his extraordinary career.

**W**HEN the forced migration of the French Jews into Italy was at its height, the Gestapo arrested Septimio Sorani, director of DELASEM (Delagazione Assistenza Emigrati Ebrei). This organization was finally forced underground after paying fifty kilograms of gold in extortion money.

Father Benoit was asked to take over a situation that demanded the immediate performance of miracles, and miracles of a sort were shortly apparent. Hundreds of proscribed Jews who yesterday were walking the streets of Rome disappeared into thin air, and in their places there appeared overnight equivalent numbers of Swiss, Hungarians, French, and Rumanians.

In achieving this feat of necromancy, Father Benoit was greatly assisted by a Jewish printer-engraver and an old hand press that was discovered in the basement of the convent; also by certain courageous Swiss, Hungarian, and Rumanian diplomats, who complained bitterly about the crudeness of the first passport forgeries they were asked to sign. They signed them anyway, often at the risk of their lives. They also signed the homemade ration cards that were necessary for the physical sustenance of the newly materialized Swiss, Hungarians, Rumanians, etc.

An essential department of this industry

was the procurement of official stamps to go on the birth certificates of these synthetic nationals. Some old documents carrying the stamps issued by various French *mairies* were unearthed by Stephen Schwamm. These provided authentic originals which an ingenious Italian partisan reproduced on a rubber stamp. The documents also required revenue stamps, which were steamed off old legal documents. When it came to the signatures, Father Benoit and Schwamm became equally expert at imitating the handwriting of a number of French mayors.

M. Chauvet, an attaché of the Swiss consulate, signed 450 of these faked passports before he felt that the limits of his diplomatic immunity had been reached. The Rumanian Ambassador Grigorcea and the Hungarian Consul Szasz were equally prepared to risk the wrath of the Gestapo. Once, when some of the Hungarian ex-Jews whose passports he had signed were arrested, Szasz (a Catholic, although the name is that of one of the oldest Hungarian-Jewish families) went directly to the Gestapo, and with a revolver pressed against his breast argued so vigorously that he obtained their release. In all, nearly 2000 forged credentials were turned out in the library of the Capuchin convent.

Others whose names deserve to be inscribed in the grateful memories of tens of thousands of Jews whom they helped to save include Monsignor Dionisi, the Protestant pastor of Amenti, who sheltered many refugees and endangered his whole family; Brigadier de Marco of the Italian police, who liberated Jewish prisoners and withstood a third-degree examination by the infamous Caruso; and the Italian refugee-bureau chief, Dr. de Fiore.

Charrier, chief of the Italian Bureau for Feeding Foreigners, was sympathetic. But in order that the Bureau's files might stand inspection, it was necessary to provide him with certificates "legalized by the Cardinal Vicar of Rome" attesting that a mixed committee collaborating with the Vatican had vouched for the cardholders. In this way some 3,000 forged ration cards were

duly attested. The Vatican, which was in full accord with Father Benoit, did not directly vouch for these documents. It merely attested the authenticity of Father Benoit's signature as head of a "Provisional Committee for the Aid of Refugees." But under the circumstances this was a good deal, and it proved to be enough.

NATURALLY, there was never enough money to pay for these and other operations. Through the British and American representatives at the Vatican, Benoit obtained from the JDC a grant of \$20,000, deposited in a London bank. This became 8,000,000 lire after it had been sold on the black market, chiefly to Italians who expected the Allies to win. When this sum was exhausted, it became necessary for Schwamm and Benoit to go to Genoa, then under heavy bombing, to obtain the 14,000 lire left by refugees when the Germans occupied the city. They traveled by automobile on tires and gas obtained by extravagant bribery of the Nazis. From Genoa they went to Milan to arrange for the transport of children into Switzerland, and there the Gestapo picked up Schwamm, who was traveling under the name of Liore. Benoit escaped and returned to Rome.

Schwamm spent three months in the concentration camps of Warsaw, Cracow, and Czenstochowa. Liberated in January 1945 by the arrival of the Red Army, he made his way back to Rome by way of Bucharest and Belgrade. Aaron Kaszstein, another of Benoit's aides, to whose courage both Formanski and Schwamm pay high tribute, was also caught. Kaszstein survived Buchenwald and is now in France.

Aba Formanski passed through nine concentration camps in all, escaping from the last one in time to join Wajc among the thousand refugees admitted to America by the special dispensation of President Roosevelt and interned for a year at Oswego.

When Schwamm got back to Rome in the spring of 1945, he found the Benoit center crippled by the arrest of these and other leaders of the group. Father Benoit

was himself in hiding. But their work had been done. Hundreds of Benoit's protégés were in America. Other hundreds were in Palestine. And the war was ending.

SO INCESSANT has been the turmoil of subsequent events that the memory of that nightmare world of the underground is already fading from the minds of its survivors. Hence the full story of what non-Jews did—and refrained from doing—in order to rescue Jewish victims of Hitlerian savagery will probably never be told. Yet something—more, surely, than is possible in a single article—should be salvaged for history, for the moral and spiritual continuum of Western civilization that the Nazis all but destroyed.

From the records that have been placed at the disposal of this writer, and from the testimony of underground leaders like Formanski and Wajc, there emerge at least two facts that may well be weighed and remembered by Jews and non-Jews alike.

The first is that, beneath all the debris of human baseness and corruption that was piled high in the wake of Hitler's conquests, there glowed a core of amazing and seemingly inextinguishable human courage and nobility. Men and women of every class and creed, in all the occupied countries, consciously risked death and torture simply because they were revolted by the ugly cruelty of the Nazis. Being quite simple people for the most part, they found it less easy to rationalize murder and torture than did some of the professors. Instinctively they rejected what seemed and was a betrayal of our common humanity, and they fought back as best they could: the janitress who lied once too often to the Gestapo and finally joined in the concentration camp the Jews whom she had sheltered; the African soldier who cleared a path for Formanski, returning to 159 Via Siciliano with his pockets full of incriminating documents and a Gestapo spy peering from the window opposite; the clerks who connived in the issuance of forged papers—these and thousands of others.

Without the collaboration of these innumerable anonymous stalwarts—their averted glances, their secret whispers, their alert counterespionage that so regularly exposed the ubiquitous Nazi stooges—it would not have been possible for Benoit and his aides to do what they did.

The second fact is especially interesting psychologically. Evidently the Nazis suffered from a kind of moral inferiority complex. Aware of this, Benoit and his collaborators saved themselves sometimes by a fox-like caution, but as often by an effrontery amounting to arrogance. "*Immer dreist!*" counseled Father Benoit, himself a personality whom it was quite impossible to bully. In fact, in his own encounters with the Gestapo, Benoit invariably seized the moral initiative, so that it was they who were made to feel on the defensive.

The success of this tactic was helped, of course, by the fact that the Nazis were never sure how much support Benoit was getting, or would get, from the Vatican. The record shows that he got a good deal. But it is also probable that Benoit's powerful example contributed importantly to stiffening the Vatican's resistance to the Nazis. Certainly, he made himself the judge as to how much he would dare, and the record shows that there was little he did not dare.

Hitler is dead, the synagogues in Rome are open, and Father Benoit has returned to his classes at 159 Via Siciliano. But anti-Semitism is not dead, either in the political and economic shambles that is Europe, or in America. Nor is the need of the Jews for a tested friend and counselor less great today than it was when the Gestapo ruled Rome and the churches were crowded with Jewish refugees, and a black-bearded, brown-robed Capuchin directed a passport mill in the library of a Catholic convent.

In those days, Benoit's Jewish associates would suggest that fate had made him "Ambassador of the Jews"—and wonder if the history of diplomacy recorded a more difficult assignment. The idea didn't seem bizarre to Father Benoit, however. He said he would consider it a great honor.

# THE LOST CHANCE FOR FULL EMPLOYMENT

## *Economic Decontrol and the Coming Depression*

BENJAMIN GINZBURG

THE turbulent reconversion period which began with V-J Day, and ended a few weeks ago with President Truman's scuttling of meat controls and stabilization, will go down in history as a period of lost opportunity. It was a time when a lasting solution of the full-employment problem—the solution that had been sought for some fifteen years—was within our reach. But we failed to grasp it.

The opportunity has passed, and we are now moving in quite another direction. The principal block that prevented us from seeing and grasping the chance to build a lasting full-employment economy was the pressure-group philosophy urging a return to a "free" economy. No sooner were the guns stilled than the tom-toms of the dominant pressure groups—business, agriculture, and a section of labor—began to beat an insistent tattoo demanding the removal of wartime restraints on prices, profits, and wages, and the restoration of free markets and free collective bargaining. To their own followers, the pressure groups sold this line of propaganda on the theory that each group should take while the taking was good. But

to the public, this cry of universal greed was presented as the formula for prosperity.

We were told that as a result of wartime controls and the dead hand of bureaucracy our whole economy lay prostrate. We had no shirts, no clothing, no sugar, no houses, no cars, no refrigerators—there was universal scarcity, all because of the controls. Remove these and restore the creative power of economic freedom, and universal abundance would gush forth.

This propaganda drowned out the few voices that attempted to point out its fallacies. Looking back at the reconversion period, an impartial mind must recognize that the production difficulties of reconversion were real ones—just like the difficulties we had in the initial period of war production. But only time, ingenuity, and teamwork could have eliminated them. They were not caused by inadequate business incentives. Business incentives—as shown by the all-time-record level of corporation profits after taxes—were more than adequate.

The only effect of giving free rein to greed was to obstruct, and not facilitate, the productive process. Raising prices and removing controls could not increase total production for the simple reason that all basic materials were being used up in one line of production or another. Expansion of basic facilities, on the other hand, needed time and an assured period of stability, which the removal of controls was calculated to destroy. The removal of controls could only encourage speculative hoarding of materials, thus increasing scarcity, discouraging the expansion of necessary plant capacity, and at the same time creating new occasions for labor-management strife.

Of course, economic adjustments had to be made in order to overcome reconversion

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Since 1935, BENJAMIN GINZBURG has been in Washington, working for various government agencies as an economist—dealing in the course of this lengthy first-hand experience with precisely such problems of over-all planning to insure full employment and prevent depression as he discusses in the present article. Before going to Washington, Dr. Ginzburg taught philosophy at the College of the City of New York and was assistant editor of the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. In 1930, he published a book, *The Adventure of Science*. Dr. Ginzburg was born in Russia in 1898, received his bachelor's degree from Columbia University in 1919, and his doctorate from Harvard University in 1926.



difficulties, but the truth was that such adjustments—adjustments in this or that price, in this or that wage, or in the distribution of basic materials for this or that industry—could best have been made under the existing controls.

Not only did pressure groups deceive themselves and the American people about how to improve the economic situation, they also grossly deceived themselves and the American people as to the extent of the difficulties we were experiencing. The propagandists talked of scarcity, scarcity, scarcity. But they ignored the fact that in economic affairs words like scarcity and plenty have both a relative and an absolute sense, and that transposition of the relative and the absolute leads to ludicrous absurdities.

Absolute scarcity—that is to say, famine and destitution—is a bad thing. But relative scarcity—demand for more goods than are available—is a good thing. It is the motive force that drives the economy to ever higher levels of production. So, too, with plenty. Absolute plenty—high individual levels of consumption—is a blessing, but relative plenty—an overabundance of goods in relation to demand and income—can be a curse, as we learned in the days of the Great Depression. Then indeed we had plenty of plenty, but it was a relative plenty, the kind we couldn't eat or support life with, because there was no money to buy the goods that glutted the market or rotted in the fields.

Now the scarcities of the reconversion period have been *relative* scarcities—scarcities in relation to income and demand, not scarcities in terms of actual levels of consumption. This was true all the way down the line. Thus, though housing was so scarce as to make any vacant apartment a priceless find, yet Americans were better housed than at any previous time in their history. In 1930, we had 244 occupied dwelling units per thousand persons; in 1946, we had 267 occupied dwelling units per thousand—the highest on record. This does not minimize the need for new housing construction. What it means is that while the population

is better housed than ever before, the demand for better housing is far from being satisfied. Despite the much advertised food scarcity, we were consuming per capita more meat, more fruits and vegetables, more dairy products, than ever before. In clothing, more was being turned out for civilian use than even in the peak year 1941. In durable consumers' goods, the monthly production of everything except passenger cars, refrigerators, and sewing machines was at an all-time high, and the stock of such articles, other than automobiles, in consumers' hands has never been so great. And even in the case of automobiles, the increased use of existing cars has been such as to make civilian gasoline consumption surpass all records. In luxury goods, the increase in sales over pre-war levels has been simply fantastic. Cigarette consumption in 1946 was twice as great as in 1939—and it wasn't very low then. The sale of beer, wines, and liquors was up 50 per cent. The sale of jewelry was 300 per cent higher than the 1935-1939 average. And so on. The fundamental summary of the situation is indicated by these three basic figures: industrial production (as measured by the Federal Reserve Board index), 75 per cent above 1939; farm output, 37 per cent greater; real national income, 50 per cent greater.

The propagandists advocated a course designed to replace a scarcity under which we were all well off, with a plenty under which most of us would have starved. The plenty they sought was the relative plenty of supply versus demand, and it was to be achieved by using high prices to drive enough consumers out of the market to make demand fall level with, or below, supply. Sometimes they frankly stated that this was their purpose, and that they considered it a laudable one.

Thus the president of the National Association of Real Estate Boards recently declared that the way to eliminate the housing scarcity was to remove all rent ceilings and force more apartment dwellers to double up. The *New York Times*, echoing this logic, has contended that the way to achieve a balance of supply and demand—whether it be



in houses or in commodities—is to let the price go up and shave off demand.\*

The propagandists thus managed to confuse the situation hopelessly. They misread the facts of our economic condition, they drew false conclusions from the facts, and they ended up by reversing the social objectives of economic life. They told us the economy was prostrate with scarcity. That wasn't so at all. They told us production could be increased by giving a free rein to self-interest. Just the opposite is true. And they finally ended up by asking us to exchange our situation of relative scarcity and a high standard of individual consumption, for relative plenty and a low standard of consumption.

**D**ISTRACTED by such prophets, we missed our chance to make use of the situation inherited from the war to insure an indefinite period of full employment and an advancing standard of living. The reconversion situation was God's gift to the full-employment planner. It couldn't have been better if it had been made to order.

First, we had full employment to start with—for the first time, during peace, since

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\* "One way to relieve the housing demand immediately is to get rid of rent control. . . . We have several million people who, because of frozen rents, are able to buy more housing space than their income would normally allow. . . . The stenographer who used to live doubled up with another now has her own individual apartment. . . . If rent were increased no more than is fair to property owners, I predict that about a million added units of rental space would immediately be available for veterans and others."—Press Release, October 13, 1946, by Boyd T. Barnard, President of the National Association of Real Estate Boards.

"To the extent that a subsidy program succeeded in holding down the price of homes, it would aggravate the present difficulties. . . . The shortage of housing is measured by the difference between the demand for new homes and the supply that can be made available. At lower prices the magnitude of the shortage would inevitably be greater than at higher prices."—*New York Times* editorial, March 8, 1946.

"Supply and demand come into balance at a price. . . . If prices are fixed too low, supply and demand cannot come into balance and the basis is laid for an unnecessary prolongation of price control."—*New York Times* editorial, October 17, 1946.

the mid-20's. Everybody had thought we would have to fight for full employment, and that at best we couldn't achieve it before 1950. But on the contrary, we had it immediately after V-J Day, and without fighting for it.

Second, we had our full employment virtually without government deficit-spending. It is true that at this writing there is still a deficit in government revenues as compared with expenditures, but even this deficit, which is quite small, would not now exist if taxes had not been cut in the fall of 1945 to the extent they were. And the existing deficit is in a sense fictitious, since it does not take into account the excess of receipts over expenditures in Social Security and other trust funds. On a cash basis, the budget was balanced during the first nine months of 1946, and for the year as a whole it will probably show a substantial surplus. Thus, the dream of full employment without deficit spending had been achieved—at least momentarily. The full employment of our people was being maintained by the demand and purchasing power that employment and production themselves were creating.

Third, demand and purchasing power were so great that we were not only buying the full output of all employable labor power, but were ready to buy even more goods than were being produced. This excess of demand was what the pressure groups denounced as a calamity of scarcity. But from the point of view of the mechanics of economic management, this excess demand was what insured full production and full employment. If current demand for one product or another should slacken, then the excess demand for other products stood ready to use up the released productive resources.

The situation of the economy during the reconversion period could be likened to that of a factory that was working at capacity, was currently receiving orders at a rate equal to its capacity production, and had, in addition, a backlog of orders equal to a full year's business. The one desire of the owners of such a factory would be to perpetuate the situation.

IF THE reconversion demand for goods is analyzed in these terms, we discover some surprising facts. In the past, whenever we had full employment, we reached it as the result of a boom in capital goods (business plant and equipment, and residential construction) and in consumers' durable goods (automobiles, refrigerators, and the like). The demand for such goods is peculiar: first, instead of being constant, like the demand for food, clothing, and other articles and services of daily consumption, it is variable and fluctuating; second, it is financed from capital resources instead of current income, usually by borrowing from financial institutions and wealthy individuals.

Because of these peculiarities of the capital and durable-goods demand, combined with the inability of the great bulk of the working population to accumulate any appreciable surplus during the boom period, when large expenditures for capital purposes are made, all previous booms held the seeds of their own destruction. When the wave of capital and durable-goods buying ebbed, consumers could not substitute an increased demand for food, clothing, and other daily necessities because most of them had no extra money for this purpose, and no bank or finance company would think it good business to lend money for non-durable goods to be consumed immediately. Thus the contraction of demand for capital and durable goods, since it could not be offset by other demand, necessarily reflected itself in a contraction of the total demand. This meant a cut in employment and in consumers' incomes, which created further curtailment in the demand for capital and durable goods, as well as in the demand for non-durable or ordinary consumers' goods. And so on down the spiral of deflation and depression.

During the reconversion period, however, we reached full employment *before* capital and durable-goods production reached high levels. Even after fifteen months of reconversion, the production of these goods is very far from satisfying the demand. Production is being held back by a shortage of

materials and manpower, both of which are being drained off into the production of so-called soft goods. In a word, *non-durable* consumers' goods—food, clothing, personal services, and the like—have sustained a phenomenally large part of the load of full employment, and are ready to sustain an even greater part if given the chance.\*

None of the economists—radical, conservative or middle-of-the-road—had quite expected things to work out this way. Everybody thought that full employment would come only through the building up of employment and production in capital and durable goods. Since that would take time, there was every reason to fear an initial period of unemployment. Government economists predicted eight to ten million unemployed by mid-1946. If business men are inclined now to laugh at these predictions, they should remember that they, too, made the same assumption of postwar recovery through investment and durable-goods demand, but they simply ignored the unemployment consequences of this assumption.

**B**UT now that things have worked out the way they have, it is easy to understand why it should have been so. For six to seven years, we have been priming the pump with gargantuan doses of deficit spending. While the greater part of the two hundred odd bil-

\* At V-J day, government statisticians expected that the rapid decline of government war expenditures, and the consequent fall of individual incomes, would produce a drop in the rate of consumer expenditures for non-durable goods amounting to 5 to 10 per cent by the fourth quarter of 1945. Actually, non-durable goods expenditures rose from \$61.5 billion (seasonally adjusted annual rate) in the second quarter of 1945 to \$70.6 billion in the fourth quarter of 1945. Similarly, the statisticians expected consumer expenditures for services to show a slight drop, but instead they showed a slight rise. Also, the latest figures for 1946 show that with total national production (Gross National Product) running at close to \$200 billion a year, consumer expenditures for non-durable goods and services are more than 10 per cent above the level that was predicted for a \$200 billion total. In other words, consumer expenditures for soft goods and services stepped into the breach immediately after V-J day, prevented the economy from slipping into recession, and were holding it during 1946 at full-employment levels.

lions in government bonds issued to finance our deficit war expenditures has ended up in the hands of business institutions and wealthy individuals, enough has stuck to the low-income groups to have affected their spending habits. In addition, these low-income groups have not only enjoyed seven years of full employment at good wages, but are still working for good wages. During part of this period, they were under pressure to restrict their spending and to save as much as possible. What is more natural than that they should now be ready to spend their income, and even some of their savings, in order to raise their standard of living?

Part of the heavy consumer spending for soft goods may reflect temporary and non-repetitive demand. Veterans' purchases of complete outfits of civilian clothing, and the stocking of linens by new families setting up housekeeping, are cases in point. But the bulk of the new buying reflects a change in the average consumer's pattern of spending and saving: he wants more beef, more ice cream, more good clothes, more amusements.

Without too fine an analysis of the elements that have created these new spending habits—and granting that the new pattern may reflect the momentary psychological atmosphere of postwar days—the point can be made that we have here a new phenomenon that can be of prime importance for full-employment policy. If American consumers, with a backlog of savings, are ready to spend a heavy proportion of current income for articles of daily consumption, or can be encouraged to do so, then full employment no longer depends on peak demand for capital and durable goods—that is, on a demand present only at the top of a business cycle.

If we can take advantage of this new phenomenon of high consumer-demand, we can make every year a year of full employment, with the total demand for goods (backed up by the cash to buy them) employing our full productive power. When the demand for capital and durable goods slumps—when there is no economic need for a great increase in plant, when we have caught up with housing construction, or

when we have all the automobiles we want—then we could have consumers standing ready with the appetite, *and the money*, to increase their consumption of everyday soft goods. Contrariwise, during a time like the reconversion period, when it is necessary to build up durable-goods production and, above all, housing (with the economy requiring only a minor amount of business-plant expansion), then we can postpone the satisfaction of consumer demand for soft goods, and shift the available materials, manpower, and resources to other sectors. Thus consumer demand can act like a spring that can be held back when necessary, but which bounds forward, when released, to take up any slack.

On this new element in the economic situation, we could have built a structure of full employment to last not two years, or five years, but indefinitely. But one more thing was still needful: to recognize that the new element was a pressure, or a force, and therefore could be utilized only if it was controlled and not allowed to go free and dissipate itself. In a word, what was needed was to link the new element of excess consumer-demand and purchasing power with the methods of inflation control we had developed during the war.

**D**URING the war, we developed ways of controlling excess purchasing-power when we did not want it to paralyze war production and create social tensions. But we were not particularly interested in getting any positive gains from the control of inflation.

It turned out, however, that controlled inflation did give us positive benefits in maintaining full employment and increasing total production. Thus one of the lessons of the war experience was: if permanent full employment, increased production, and a rising standard of living are wanted, build up mass purchasing power by hook or by crook until there is a large surplus of purchasing power distributed over the economy. Then put on controls and keep them on indefinitely. As a result you will have an excess of demand pressing on production and

stimulating it to higher levels.\* As higher production is achieved, higher purchasing power or income is created by this production. But this higher purchasing power, plus the margin of unused purchasing power left over from before, again creates an excess of demand over supply. And so on to ever higher levels of production and income. Under controlled inflation, demand acts like the rabbit in a dog race, running just as fast as production, but always maintaining its lead. Which is as it should be.

During the reconversion period, we had excess purchasing power already there—we didn't have to build it. And we had controls already there—we didn't have to build them either, only to maintain them and adapt

\* No deficit spending would be needed, since the total of the demand for everyday soft goods and the demand for capital goods and durable consumers' goods would be larger than the full employment output of the entire economy. The satisfaction of both of these types of demand would have to be rationed through the allocation of materials and other productive resources to the various sectors of the economy according to a social determination of the most desirable use of our resources. Thus, in a period when heavy-capital-goods production is desirable, more resources would be siphoned off into the capital-goods sector than in ordinary times. As that type of output ceases to be required in the same volume, the vacated resources would be shifted to the consumers' soft-goods sector, and the goods so produced would be snapped up by the consumers. Should the social necessity for heavy-capital-goods production occur again, extra resources would be shifted back from the soft goods to the capital-goods sector with the result that the satisfaction of consumer demand would be temporarily more restricted than usual, while the satisfaction of investment demand would be temporarily less restricted than usual.

Government deficit-spending was required in the past because consumers did not have any money to increase their purchases of ordinary consumers' goods whenever the purchases of investment goods flagged, thus setting off a deflationary spiral. Then the government had to step in and feed money or purchasing power to consumers by a variety of means in order to build up consumer demand to such levels as would ultimately stimulate the resumption of investment. Under the arrangement here discussed, the economic disease would be stopped at the source. If we see to it that all the John Smiths have accumulated savings, that they have work at good wages to start with, and that they do not get fleeced out of their savings or their good wages by high prices and profiteering, then we will never have to worry about full employment, or purchasing power, or deficit spending.

them to peacetime conditions. We had a chance, in other words, to try out the benefits of controlled inflation under extremely favorable conditions.

It is a sad commentary on the state of our economic intelligence that the great controversy about controls was whether the controls should be taken off immediately the war ended, or whether they should be retained a little while longer, until the inflationary pressure died down and supply was brought into balance with demand. It should have been our concern to see to it that the steam in the economic boiler did not get dissipated either by explosion or by the opening of valves and vents, but was kept confined and made to work for our benefit.

By allowing the inflationary pressure to be dissipated, we may achieve a momentary balance between supply and demand, but it is not a stable balance, and it sets the stage for the deflationary spiral of the 30's—a sort of economic dog race in reverse, with the dog of falling production chasing the rabbit of demand.

**B**UT the die has been cast. At this writing, BOPA and other control agencies are removing controls as fast as they can. Nevertheless, what we have been discussing will remain of permanent importance, and it is worth taking a dispassionate glance at how our society would look, economically, politically, and socially, if we had decided to maintain full employment through inflation controls.

In such an economy, we would retain essentially all the wartime inflation controls, but not those other wartime controls that applied to the military effort and war production. We would have, first of all, universal price control, with ceilings adjusted downwards as well as upwards in order to take care of changing costs. We would have wage-control—not frozen wages, but control by boards that would lay down broad policies and apply them to individual disputes. (It is economically impossible and socially undesirable to have either prices or wages frozen. But it is both necessary and feasible to make



adjustments slowly enough so that stresses are distributed over the economic and social system without violent shocks.) We would have allocation of scarce materials and rationing of those important consumer-items of which there were serious shortages. Finally, we would have a permanent excess-profits tax that would remove the temptation of business to seek too high prices and profits.

Such a system of controls, accepted as a permanent peacetime affair, would be easier to administer than a wartime system. During the war, inflation controls were administered as a sideline to the war effort. In peacetime, the controls would be a prime responsibility of government. During the war, the controls were to prevent frenzied bidding against the small supply of civilian goods left after the military had taken all they wanted. In peacetime, the controls would have the simpler task of preventing overbidding against the total current production of goods, all of which is available for civilian consumption.

The fact that inflation controls broke down during the reconversion period, after working fairly well during the war, does not disprove the proposition that they are easier to administer in peace than in war. The controls broke down because popular assent to them ebbed away. The government agreed with the opposition's claim that the controls were an evil to be done away with as quickly as possible. This created an impatience to see them over with at once, which the pressure groups exploited. But once controls are instituted permanently, there is no reason why they should not be accepted as part of the social and economic mores, and obeyed voluntarily rather than by coercion.

It is true that a system of inflation controls cannot help but seem psychologically irksome—particularly at the beginning—to the producer groups. The philosopher Kant observed that a bird, feeling the resistance of the air in its flight, doubtless imagines that it could fly faster in a vacuum—when, of course, it would only drop to the ground. So producer groups are under the illusion that

they can fly faster and make more money in the vacuum of a "free" economy. But inflation control, in its actual effects on business opportunity, is a blessing to business rather than an obstacle. Under a scheme of inflation controls, the government does not hog any of the business opportunities it creates—it leaves them all to private enterprise. The government does not build factories, as it had to do during the war; it does not purchase nearly 50 per cent of the output of the private economy, as it also had to do during the war; it does not even operate WPA projects in competition with private contractors, as it had to do during the 30's.

In short, inflation control is no more a threat to private enterprise than marriage laws are to the institution of the family. The purpose in both cases is to foster rather than to harm.

**I**t is clear that a system of controls would not permit consumers to have everything they want when they want it. But planned allocation of materials can make all necessities available in adequate amounts, even if the output of desired luxuries is behind consumer demand. Even under the extreme urgencies of war there was no problem about necessities. Controls provided meat and they provided housing—even when about half our resources had to be devoted to the war. Controls, continued effectively after the war, could have provided the same things more easily during the reconversion period.

A recent cartoon in the *New Yorker* pictured a housewife ringing a doorbell and asking the man who answered it whether he had a vacuum cleaner to sell. This cartoon may be said to sum up the advantages and disadvantages of a controlled economy. The housewife has to hunt for a vacuum cleaner and wait six months to get it because everybody is employed and has so much money to spend that the supply of cleaners is snapped up, even without salesmen. In the old days, it was the other way around: you could buy all the vacuum cleaners you wanted then, and the problem was for the producer and his salesmen to find enough



families with sufficient steady employment and income to be able to buy them.

Would this mean exchanging our birth-right of freedom for a life of controls? Let us examine our war experience. Were our civil and political rights interfered with by inflation controls during the war? Everybody knows they were not. On this point, it is interesting to compare the Civil War and World War II—the first a war in which there were no inflation or other economic controls (and in fact a complete reign of economic anarchy), and the second a war in which inflation controls were developed to their highest point. As every student of constitutional history knows, there were far more serious interferences with civil and political liberties—including arbitrary arrests and suspension of *habeas corpus*—under Lincoln than under Roosevelt. There are in every war certain factors that press on our democratic liberties, but inflation control is not one of them.

The purpose of inflation controls is to maintain full employment. And everybody recognizes—or claims to recognize—that private enterprise and democratic liberties cannot long endure unless we solve the full-employment problem. Inflation controls, the only means yet found for maintaining full employment in a democratic society, can thus be a way of protecting democracy.

It is not increased government planning that leads to the totalitarianism that "minorities" fear. It is depression, bringing social conflict in its wake.

**N**ow, what about the course we charted when we decided to free ourselves of controls? The answer is that we have no course, and are drifting into stormy waters.

No thinking person has any illusion that the removal of controls has solved our problems. Curiously enough, those most pessimistic about the immediate future are the Wall Street investors and speculators whose profession it is to bet on economic trends. While the National Association of Manufacturers and the *Wall Street Journal* cheered at the death of OPA, the investors and spec-

ulators pulled in their horns and sent the stock market tumbling.

We are headed for a crash and recession—but *not necessarily in the immediate future*. It is true that economists and businessmen are now generally predicting a recession in 1947, one they hope will be short—and salutary. Already voices are being heard welcoming this prospective recession as a "natural correction" of conditions; we are advised that if we do nothing to interfere with it, the "correction" will restore economic health in a very short time. This advice comes from some of the same people who told us that if we pulled off the controls and let supply balance with demand in a free market, prices wouldn't go up—much.

The argument of the present article does not call for any prediction about economic conditions in 1947. But this writer does believe that, notwithstanding the uneasy forebodings of our business leaders and economic experts, the immediate situation is not so precarious as they make out. The switches have been set for a gigantic wreck, but the two locomotives are not yet within easily measurable distance of the big bump. Although high prices are tending to put a damper on the soft-goods field, yet in the capital and durable-goods field, the volume of unsatisfied demand appears so great that it cannot be frightened away by high prices. It thus may well be that we shall weather the minor perils of 1947, and go on triumphantly into a more or less prolonged period of prosperity maintained by capital and durable-goods production—feeling secure and unafraid, until the storm really breaks.

There is the possibility, of course, that we may recover our sanity before a crash occurs. There is a greater likelihood that we shall recover our sanity only *after* a crash. But whenever the recovery of sanity occurs, what we should do remains perfectly clear. When the hour of opportunity arrives again, we must then work to make good all the depletions in mass purchasing-power that will have taken place; we must again build up a surplus of purchasing power; and we must put on the controls and keep them there.

## WE WISH YOU WOULDN'T DO THAT!

### *Rejoinder to a Gentile's View of Jewish Public Relations*

RALPH E. SAMUEL

ONE of the most hopeful developments in group relations in the United States during recent years has been the melting away of the reluctance to bring the problem out into the open for full and free discussion. Magazine articles, radio "Town Meetings," and forum gatherings have thrust the subject before wide and varied audiences for frank treatment, without kid gloves or reserve.

That Jews have come to welcome such open discussion is doubly encouraging. It indicates increased community strength, forthrightness, and inner security that we no longer shrink from the public airing of a

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"I Wish They Wouldn't Do That," the frank criticism of Jewish public relations by a Gentile expert in the field, in our October issue, evoked national comment and a flood of letters. COMMENTARY plans to continue the discussion of the provocative questions raised by the anonymous writer, starting with this article by RALPH E. SAMUEL. Mr. Samuel is in the investment brokerage business, is active in Jewish communal affairs, and is an occasional writer *con amore*. His rather wide communal activities include service as chairman of the Business Men's Council of the New York Federation of Jewish Philanthropies and chairman of its postwar building fund committee, as chairman of the Greater New York Army and Navy Committee of the Jewish Welfare Board, as chairman of the New York Chapter of the American Jewish Committee, and as one of the committee of six which founded the Greater New York Fund. He is chairman of the COMMENTARY publication committee. His essays "A Common Sense View of Anti-Semitism" and "I Liked Your Article But—" appeared in the *Contemporary Jewish Record*. He was born in Rochester, New York, and attended Dartmouth College, class of 1913. Perhaps it is unnecessary to mention that the views expressed here by Mr. Samuel represent personal opinions, and are not written in any of his various official capacities.

problem that in former days was rather "hush-hush." Certainly it cannot have been more than a couple of decades ago that the mere mention of the word "Jew" on the stage, on the lecture platform, over the radio, or in the public press, brought some measure of apprehension to more timid American Jews.

And, consistent with this healthy and clarifying tendency, most Jews, I dare say, were not too unhappy about "I Wish They Wouldn't Do That!" in the October issue of COMMENTARY, whatever may have been the extent of their individual agreement or disagreement.

Speaking for myself, on some counts I agree almost completely with the anonymous author, who tackled the subject with such obvious good will and employed so engaging a title. As I look back, the handling of the O'Donnell episode was doubtless somewhat on the panicky side, and perhaps there was too much aggressiveness in the counter-tactics employed. And perhaps too little thought was given to the wisdom of associating the Jewish group with pressure on the press of a kind that all liberal-minded men have reason to fear.

Similarly, as some of us realize, albeit belatedly, the compilation and documentation of the Jewish war effort in an attempt to ward off anti-Semitism was probably a needless and misdirected expenditure of time and money.

Many of us would agree, moreover, that full-page advertisements devoted to special pleading on one side or another of political questions affecting the Jews are an emotional performance and little else, and profit no one save the newspaper publisher.

If Jewish public relations are so often pitched in an emotional, even hysterical

tone, the writer of the article indicates that he understands why. He remembers, as all Gentiles of good will must remember, that over six million European Jews were wiped out in recent years in a manner as cruel, brutal, and shocking as the world has ever known. But one doubts whether our writer quite realizes the depth of the shock, or the measure of the identification of the Jews whose lives are lived on safer shores with the horrible fate of their brethren overseas. And it was not merely the mass slaughter, it was the sheer, complete guiltlessness of the victims, the insane irrationality of it all! Yes, Jews are jittery. And if Jews five thousand miles away from Germany sometimes act in an even more desperate way in the face of relatively mild signs of anti-Semitism than their co-religionists in concentration camps, that is a familiar paradox. The man who believes he has the first symptoms of some dread disease is often more panicky than the actual sufferer.

And, sadly, we must admit that our community has indeed some "leaders" who are not above exploiting these natural emotions; who fan all-too-legitimate grievances into hatred and intransigence; who build a political ideology on the suspicion and sense of hurt that Jews feel about the German crime, and about the all but complete indifference to it exhibited elsewhere. If our Gentile writer finds some Jewish advertisements unpersuasive in their name-calling and hostility, I dare say this is because they are not intended to be persuasive. They mirror a state of mind that sees or pretends to see every Gentile as a Hitler, real or incipient, and force and violence as the only language the Gentile world understands. Happily, it is but a tiny minority that acts on these assumptions. On the other hand, the verbal expression of these assumptions in advertisements seems to "blow off steam" for a great many rather sober Jews.

ALL this being true, Mr. Anonymous seems a little naive in asking Jewish public relations to proceed with a kind of sweet reasonableness. This is expecting

too much from human beings—even Jews. But if he is asking us to be intelligent—whatever the stress, the emergency, the provocation—there we must say "amen." He is eminently sound and wise when he says, "the impact of catastrophe makes unsound action understandable; it does not entirely excuse it. The test of leadership is sober judgment in dire emergency."

In this respect, our sins have indeed been many. But is one too sanguine in feeling that even when it comes to leadership we have made progress recently in the direction of balance and intelligence—though perhaps the results are as yet not strikingly apparent?

But first one should make sure that our writer understands that there is not the semblance of a Jewish hierarchy in the United States. I emphasize this because he strongly deplores the "lack of consolidated leadership"—incidentally placing far too much stress and hope on the power of "community leaders."

American Jews generally would be the first to admit their lack of "consolidated leadership." There is no "big brass" in American Jewry, and one doubts there ever will be. For Jews are an individualist sort of people, and no one of them can presume to speak for more than a segment. On matters of religion and on the baffling question of Palestine, Jews divide up in their opinions and attitudes, just as all Americans do in reaching for solutions of general religious, political, or economic problems.

The author raises the point that Messrs. Rosenman, Morgenthau, and Baruch, for example, seldom if ever speak for Jews in America. Estimable gentlemen and devoted citizens though they are, they would have no right, organizationally or otherwise, to do so. The elected heads of the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the B'nai B'rith, the Zionist Organization of America, the Hadassah—to name but a few organizations—can, I would suppose, reasonably commit their own groups and exert some influence on their handling of public-relations problems. But we must never overlook the salient fact that

the overwhelming majority of American Jews, perhaps 90 per cent and more, are unaffiliated with any Jewish organization other than their synagogue or temple—and, numerically, membership there, too, is not impressive.

Consequently, the American Gentile, and the American Jew, too, for that matter, can spare themselves puzzlement, annoyance, and frustration if they keep constantly in mind the basic fact that no one speaks for *the* Jews in the United States.

At the same time, a limited beginning involving a limited number of organizations has been made toward wiser joint leadership. Not quite three years ago, the National Community Relations Advisory Council was set up, representing a concerted effort on the part of six Jewish national bodies and twenty-odd local Councils to coordinate their defense work and their public-relations activity. This organization holds out considerable promise. But here, too, its most ardent advocate would not assert that it could pretend to speak for American Jewry as a whole. Indeed, the NCRAC was not created for that purpose.

In another direction, there is progress toward sounder practice in combating group tensions and race hatred. In recent years, major organizations in the field have been increasingly self-conscious about their methods and their actual effectiveness. Is the true nature of the enemy really understood? Are techniques taken over wholesale from the fields of advertising and mass publicity fitted to cope with a phenomenon that seems rooted in deep emotions and fed by basic social frustrations? How devise better methods? As a result of this self-questioning, a number of these organizations have organized large-scale scientific investigations in which the interest of first-rank social psychologists, opinion-research experts, psychiatrists and sociologists, both non-Jewish and Jewish, has been engaged. While it is too early to look for major changes in public relations and tactics as the result of the findings of these studies, already a healthy influence is being exerted toward a more ra-

tional, scientific approach to the problem of combating this major human irrationality.

**O**ur Gentile public-relations expert is at his wisest when he urges us to lower our sights from the high levels of national programs and leadership and address ourselves to the American "grass roots." But I must say that one Jewish reader found our writer's report of what he saw there curiously puzzling and confused.

Take the description of a musical Jewish household in his community that frequently entertained gifted musicians, but limited invited guests to Jewish friends. Gentiles in the neighborhood, also devoted to music, resented their being excluded; but after a spell the fault was remedied, with the result, we are told, that Jewish guests are now in the minority, and the evenings have become the focal point of culture in Suburbia.

I find this incident rather amusing, for in reverse, it describes the kind of exclusion that Jews in America have met with for generations. Here the shoe, and it is a tiny shoe of course, is for once on the other foot. But this incident gives me the excuse to say to the anonymous writer of the article—and to as many Gentiles as COMMENTARY reaches—that perhaps we have our "We wish *you* wouldn't do that!" list.

It would be a fairly short list, but one that would demonstrate that the question in the large is a bilateral one. And it is a list that is concerned with far deeper and more significant phases than most of the transitory incidents Mr. Anonymous' article touched upon.

Let us point out a few fundamental facts to the average American Gentile. Let us remind him that there are 4,000,000 or 5,000,000 Jews in the United States, between 3 and 4 per cent of the population, and that the Jew, it would seem obvious, has as much right in these United States as anyone else. He is not here on sufferance or tolerance. He is part and parcel of the American scene, and he does not want to be patronized by anyone on any count. His privileges, duties, and responsibilities as an



American are identical with those of the American Gentile, whose forebears no doubt made the Atlantic passage some years, or even generations, earlier.

To borrow Mr. Churchill's phrase: "What kind of people do they think we are?" I should like the privilege of setting forth my version.

We are, by and large, as good citizens as our Gentile neighbors. We have equal respect and desire for education. We are just as much interested in civic affairs, in philanthropy, in science, in cultural pursuits. In brief, we have made the American way of life our way of life, contributing to the pattern and scheme of things a full measure of duties performed, of originality, creativeness, and vitality.

(We would be the first to admit that there are errant Jews, just as there are errant Americans in every group, but we resent, as does almost every American, any attempt to make individual cases the justification for group labels or stigmata.)

Having put this on record, I should like to set forth a few of the more important items on our "We wish you wouldn't do that" list.

**F**IRST and foremost is economic discrimination. Here Mr. Anonymous is doubtless far better informed than I. For he must know of the thousands upon thousands of business enterprises throughout America that shy away—to use a mild term—from the employment of Jews, despite any and all talk, or existence, of FEPC.

Advertising, banking, engineering—these are but three fields that come quickly to mind when one thinks of economic discrimination. The list can be expanded indefinitely, with only the most nominal research.

One has only to consider the young Jews graduating from our colleges, our engineering schools, our graduate schools of business administration: earnest and capable young men who meet frustration when hunting for jobs, and who know they must Anglicize their names and practically surrender

their religion if they are to make a start in the lines of endeavor they have chosen.

Consider this all too prevalent condition, if you will, in the light of the state of the world today. Think of it for what it is—a widespread counter-democratic practice that denies here at home the gospel of democracy which the United States is attempting to preach in the world outside. The American, the democratic doctrine cannot be strengthened for ideological struggle abroad when it is denied here at home.

So first on our list of the practices that we wish you would not follow is the extremely serious one of economic discrimination.

Second on our list is the distressing subject of restriction and discrimination in American educational institutions: our colleges, universities, and professional schools. Discrimination on the part of universities is repugnant to everyone believing in democracy. To countenance it in state-supported universities is tantamount to accepting for America a government-sanctioned *numerus clausus* on the pre-war East-European model. And the case against privately-endowed universities is equally strong, if such universities take themselves seriously as cultural and educational pillars of American life. But the question is not a simple one once one enters the field of practical struggle. The demand for immediate and absolute abolition of limitations in non-state-supported universities can hope for little success; and thus in a domain that has some claim to be considered voluntary and private, one should prefer to appeal to persuasion, intelligent joint planning, public opinion, and the educational ideals of educators, rather than to legal and political action.

Somewhere between the two extremes—today's grievous discrimination and a head-on pressure-group struggle—there must be a practical, workable solution. And it would seem to me that it is your job, Mr. Anonymous, and the job of every liberal Gentile in America, to do some worrying about the problem and to work toward a solution.

Moreover, you must start with the thesis that Jewish boys and girls have a deep thirst

for education, education that in all too many instances was denied their parents on economic grounds. And this thirst should be allayed in the years ahead; perhaps it can be allayed by sectional or national joint action on the part of the colleges and graduate schools. I make no pretense at being able to blueprint the answer.

But well up toward the top of our list *for you* is the indifference you exhibit as a group to the painful subject of discrimination in our American universities. It is your problem just as thoroughly as it is ours, and we would feel oh, so much better about it if you showed a sympathetic and constructive interest.

**N**EXT on our list for you is the irritating subject of residential restrictions. Consider, if you will, the number of apartment houses in our cities and the number of suburban sections that adopt the euphemism "highly restricted." Ask yourself what would be the effect on you if you attempted to rent an apartment—assuming you could find one—and you met evasion and delay to such an extent that you realized you were not wanted, that you were a pariah. Ask yourself, too, how you would react if you had the same experience in trying to buy a home in a pleasant suburban community, perhaps coming up against owner-agreements that homes or land for homes should not be sold to Jews.

In other words, long before the present general housing emergency, Jews had a peculiar housing problem of their own. I can't believe it has made for democracy, and I doubt that you can believe it either. My plea is that you direct your healthy interest in group relations to this phase of the problem. Is it not time you helped write an end to the undemocratic procedure that stresses a "good neighbor" policy abroad, with "restricted neighbors" at home?

Should I mention the aggravating problem of travel and hotel restrictions? I thought to omit it—admittedly, this is not a vital problem. For if the American Jew can get a satisfactory education, make a living in

the business or profession he enjoys, and select a place to live in, in normal times, without restrictive handicaps, he probably has no serious grievances as a proud citizen of a democratic America.

Nevertheless, let's talk about travel and hotel limitations; perhaps just because they are not important, they seem to get under *our* skin. Hotels throughout the nation—and I am speaking of course of resort hotels—through the use of one device or another feel that it is good business to stress *for your benefit* their restrictive policies. It's really not nice. Jews obviously can do little about this situation. It is a unilateral problem that can be solved only when the liberal, right-thinking Gentiles of America want it different.

Surely, in all conscience, it is not we who are being clannish. Surely, it is not we who set in motion the vicious circle of exclusion and clinging together and further exclusion. What will vitiate much of your often wise discussion for many Jewish readers is the irritating assumption that it is we, and we alone, who should change, we alone who should adapt our behavior. You imply that we do not meet you halfway. Maybe we are waiting for you to take the first step.

We have been waiting for a long time for some real move on the part of Gentile "grass roots" leadership—and I don't mean a few gracious individuals—to come forward and fight this anti-Semitic thing. When do you mean to roll up your sleeves and help, good neighbor?

**H**ERE I bring to an end the list of "specifications" and write of the problem in more general terms, more spiritual terms if you will: for betterment of group relations is very largely a matter of inner mood. Here we are, 140,000,000 Americans, living together and working together. We know that the United States is the sole remaining great liberal capitalist nation. It has proved its basic strength in a century of unprecedented expansion. It has successfully defended itself in two world wars within the short space of a quarter of a century. But,

today, misgivings and doubts beset us on all sides. Problems, domestic and foreign, are so numerous and so baffling that many of us in our weaker moments begin to wonder if suitable solutions will ever appear.

And I submit that this country of ours will need every conceivable ounce of strength it can summon if the way of life we want to preserve is to be preserved.

The fabric of our nation must be made up of strong threads, woven together in a well-ordered pattern of harmony and complete cooperation. A full participation for Jews in every phase of American life—and full participation for every other minority group—can only make for strengthening the texture of our national character. The decades ahead, heaven knows, are going to be difficult enough; they will be impossible if we are unable to make democracy broad and genuine and “unrestricted.”

I am well aware of the more or less primitive fear of the dissimilar, and conceivably what I am suggesting may be difficult at the beginning. (There comes to mind the Clare Briggs cartoons: “They do not speak our language.”) But Jews, when discrimination and restriction start to ebb, may make a surprisingly significant additional contribution to many strata of American life, strata that heretofore have been closed to them. For on the level of daily living, as well as on the business, artistic, and professional level, I cannot help but believe that they have much to offer, with their special verve, alertness, and broad interests. And everything I have to say here applies equally to the problem of relations between whites and Negroes in America, or between the majority and any minority.

MR. ANONYMOUS will not mind, I am sure, my attempt to transfer his thesis from the realm of specific and transitory incidents over into the broader field of fundamental principles that seems to me of more profound significance. His complaints, and that may be an unfair word, concern isolated happenings. I would enlist his interest, and the interest of all liberal democratic Gentiles, in the wider subject of the mores of our nation.

The problem of group relations is not a patchwork problem. It is not a problem of a few ads screaming to high heaven on some phase of a political question. It is not a problem that will yield to having a minister, a priest, and a rabbi go up and down the land, somewhat in the manner of Johnny Appleseed of old, as a symbol of group amity. It is not a problem of gestures and peripheral action.

It is a problem of every group in America—the majority group and all minority groups—coalescing into one body politic and one body social. This was, as I have said, the great secret of our war success, and it will be the secret of our strength through decades of peace, if strong we are to be.

But all in all, we can be thankful to Mr. Anonymous for his following the doctrine that “right can win out only through an active and open discussion of issues,” and it is encouraging that he is sufficiently interested in the subject of group relations to make his contribution toward their betterment.

When the time comes that his example is widely followed, then we can begin to say that progress is being made. Speed the day!

## PALESTINE ISSUES AND CONGRESS AGENDA

### Two Reports

#### Curfew in Jerusalem

SHLOMO KATZ

**T**HERE'S a curfew in Jerusalem. It has been in force for nearly three weeks, and there is no indication that it will end soon. It is now November and the first winter rains have not yet fallen. But Jerusalemites declare with feigned gaiety: "Oh, it will probably go on all winter!"

A curfew is an insidious thing. It is like a nightmare. It comes with darkness. With dawn it lifts its oppressive weight. In the bright morning light, it is difficult to believe in the curfew, any more than one can believe in a nightmare. But as the hours pass and the sun begins to incline toward the horizon, one is seized by a restlessness and a dread. One senses the oncoming hour of the curfew as a sick person senses the rise of his temperature toward nightfall, or as one obsessed by fright grows panicky with the coming of darkness.

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THESE two letters from Palestine were written on the eve of the reopening of the London Conference and the opening of the World Zionist Congress in Basel, further stages—perhaps final ones—in the ten-year ordeal of the Jewish settlement. SHLOMO KATZ recently returned to Palestine, where in the early 30's he spent a few years as a member of a collective colony. Mr. Katz was managing editor of the *Jewish Frontier*, organ of the Labor Zionists, from 1936 to 1942, and then served four years in the United States Army. He was born in the Ukraine in 1909 and raised in the United States. He wrote the much discussed article "No Hope Except Exodus" for the April COMMENTARY. MOSCHE SMELANSKY, who has appeared often in the pages of this magazine, is an adherent of Dr. Judah Magnes' moderate *Ihud* group, and has been for a long time a leader of the Jewish farmer's organization. He has lived in Palestine since he was sixteen years old, and he is now seventy-two.

The curfew in Jerusalem lasts from six o'clock in the afternoon till six in the morning. To be exact I should perhaps say: "in part of Jerusalem," for the curfew only applies to a part of the city, that large section of it that is densely inhabited by Jews. The old city within its ancient walls is outside the curfew limits; so are several of the wealthier suburbs, most of which are inhabited by non-Jews.

**I**N THE morning, Jerusalem lies golden on its rocky hills. The bright light of the sun is reflected from the massive, cream-colored masonry of the buildings. The red-tiled roofs add to the cheerful atmosphere. There is a solidity and severe dignity about the city that is reassuring and rules out thoughts of gloom. The bright light is mixed with sound and motion. In the central streets the sidewalks are crowded with a colorful throng. Hebrew, German, Yiddish, Arabic, and occasional other languages mingle in a Babel of voices. Little boys and girls, briefcases containing their schoolbooks slung on their backs, scurry underfoot. Groups of people, trying to catch a glimpse of the morning headlines, crowd about the newsstand. Automobiles dash by at breakneck speed, constantly blowing their horns. And into this medley there occasionally strays a flock of goats that somehow manage to keep out from under the wheels of the autos; they amble carelessly along until they vanish into a side street.

People sit at the small tables in the numerous cafés, drinking their morning tea before going to work. They are in a hurry, since many of them still work on the summer schedule: from seven-thirty till two-thirty in the afternoon. They read their papers while they eat. The headlines tell of military vehicles blown up on the highways by mines, of a boatload of "illegal" immi-



grants approaching the coast, of a new Jewish settlement established somewhere on the countryside. These have been the customary headlines in past weeks. In many cases the newspapers belong to the cafés; the patrons gulp down their tea, return the papers to their racks, and dash away to work.

For some hours, life retains its normal tempo. The bomb explosions of the previous night seem far away. The boatload of immigrants creeping toward the shore under the watchful, waiting eyes of British destroyers and planes seems very unreal in Jerusalem, many miles from the coast. The new settlement, putting up its first barrack, its tents, and its barbed-wire fence somewhere in the rocky hills or on a sandy plain, is also very remote, as if in a distant country. The city breathes and lives its usual life.

In a well-furnished room in a public building, a group of newspaper correspondents sits and listens to official announcements. Bright questions are directed at the spokesman; answers are given. Tomorrow, the newspapers will report that some wounded terrorists were found near the scene of an explosion, that the vessel carrying the "illegal" immigrants has already been boarded by British sailors. Meanwhile, the life of the city goes on as if nothing untoward has happened or is likely to happen.

Soldiers walk about the streets. They carry their weapons with them. They saunter aimlessly from one show window to another, looking at the displays. Some stop in front of a theater. The sight of their weapons is annoying. In the bright light of noon the street seems utterly peaceful. Why should they be carrying weapons? But nobody says a word to them. People pass them by as if they did not exist.

Military vehicles pass in the streets, singly and in convoys. Like the armed soldiers and the ever-present barbed wire, they, too, are ignored. Two different worlds seem to coexist here, the military and the civilian, and each appears to disregard the other. One steps out of the way of an armored car; one avoids a projecting strand of barbed wire with an expression of non-recognition.

In the afternoon a cool breeze begins to stir. The crowds on the street become more dense. Office and shopworkers are through for the day and stroll about the streets talking with friends or shopping. The stores and cafés are crowded.

THEN a certain tension begins to be felt. The lines of people waiting for buses lengthen. Shoppers as well as shopkeepers become just a little impatient. Café habitués still occupy every table, but a strain creeps into their conversation. Is there really a shade of hysteria in their laughter? No, it must be a trick of the imagination. And yet, there is definitely something in the air as the afternoon breezes grow strong and cooler, and the slanting rays of the setting sun hint at the approaching twilight. There is uneasiness.

"I must be running along now, the curfew, you know," someone in the street says loudly in parting. "Lady, please!" a woman shopper pleads with a salesgirl, "it's getting near curfew time." The dandified young man and his girl friend sitting in Café Vienna hastily finish their Turkish coffee: "Let's go. The curfew." And the young man surreptitiously glances at his wristwatch to see if he has enough time to take his girl home and reach his own home before the streets have to be cleared.

Now the curfew seizes the city. From Jaffa Road and Ben Yehuda Street and King George Avenue, masses of humanity stream away, drawn by an invisible centrifugal force. It looks like a mass exodus from the business section. People walk fast and increase their pace with every passing minute. There's only a minute left to play and each must get to his goal—either reach his home or cross the line separating the curfew area from the free zone. The clatter of iron shutters being pulled down over display windows and the shuffle of rapidly moving feet are heard on all sides.

And almost suddenly, the streets are empty. Now everybody has suddenly died, and one is left alone in an empty world. Sidewalks so crowded half an hour earlier

are deserted. Doors and windows are shut. In the gloom, a solitary cat surveys the scene, is apparently frightened by the emptiness, and dashes off into a hallway.

Now the creatures of the night appear. British armored cars and tanks begin to patrol the streets. At the borders of the curfew zone, barbed-wire concertinas are stretched across the streets. Posts are set up at the main intersections. The gun-carriers and tracked cars plod along and send probing fingers of light into dark corners, alleys, doorways. From an upper-story window a light sifts through the shutters; there's the sound of a radio.

Jerusalem is besieged for the night.

**S**CARCELY an hour has passed since the streets were cleared when a powerful explosion is heard. The sirens begin to scream. A few minutes pass and then comes another explosion, and still another.

A group of people sit in a room dimly lit by a kerosene lamp and a pair of candles. The lights had been shut off from their block. They didn't know whether the explosions had anything to do with it or not. In Jerusalem, electricity is frequently shut off in different quarters for a few hours in the evening. Jerusalemites resent this unnecessary inconvenience, but they are no longer excited by it and take it with the same outward calm they display toward more dramatic events.

"What do you think of these fellows who throw the bombs?" I asked a middle-aged woman who was in the room.

"Maybe they're doing us a lot of harm," she said, "but I love them."

Her answer came as a surprise, considering her age and her generally mild disposition. She seemed to feel that her outburst called for an explanation, and continued: "You, you are from America and you don't understand things like this. I am from Poland. I came here many years ago, more than twenty years ago. But most of my family remained behind in Poland. Do you know what the Germans did to them? They didn't kill them outright; they buried them

alive. I saw a letter from a man from my native town who escaped and is now in a camp in Germany. He saw it all. Five hundred Jews were herded along by one German soldier, and they didn't even dream of defending themselves. They could have torn him to pieces, but they didn't even try. I had a nephew. He escaped to Russia. Some months ago he returned to Poland and wrote to me asking that I help him reach Palestine. I went to the immigration office of the Jewish Agency. They could do nothing for me. 'He will have to come here the way other Jews are coming,' they told me. Who knows, he may be on the ship the British warships are trailing now.

"I know these terrorists are causing us a lot of grief. If I had my way there wouldn't be any bombs thrown. In elections I vote for moderate Zionist parties. All the same I can't help feeling the way I do. Whenever I hear an explosion at night, I bless the hand that planted the bomb. I feel that it is avenging my relatives who would have been here, alive in Jerusalem, if the English had not kept them out of the country.

"You have just come from America and complain about a lot of things, the high prices and the housing shortage. Believe me, that's nothing. We could take in all the Jews of Europe if they would only let us. You saw the solid houses of Jerusalem. We would put up another story on every one of these houses. Then there would be room for everyone. And food, too. Go to see the settlements. There you will see what we can do to raise food."

**I** RECALLED another conversation I had had some hours earlier with a wealthy Palestinian. He was a native of the country and had accumulated a small fortune during the war. The conversation inevitably drifted toward terrorism and the general political situation. He, too, was opposed to terrorism, but on somewhat different grounds. "We cannot afford to fight or even to antagonize the English," he said. "We are too weak for that. Our only way is to try persuasion. The terrorists are our greatest enemies."

Then he changed the subject and, knowing that I was from America, he hinted at some scheme by means of which I could help him import some luxury for his household from New York. I politely declined.

This earlier conversation ran through my mind as the middle-aged woman—so non-terrorist in appearance and mentality—spoke. I asked her: "Would you shelter a wounded terrorist were one to knock at your door and ask for asylum?"

She paused for a moment, then answered: "I would. I know their deeds are harmful but I cannot consider them enemies."

The attitude of this woman may have been exaggerated in some particulars. In general, however, it is fairly representative of her class of people and, allowing for some modifications, this class represents the bulk of the Jewish community. If the mentality of the terrorists themselves is a product of final despair, the attitude of the majority of the people is one bred by the experience of European Jewry, to whom they feel so closely bound, and the state of siege under which the Jewish community in Palestine now lives. Common sense prevents them from justifying indiscriminate terrorist acts. But as long as the leaky boats carrying "illegal" immigrants roam the seas, and their human cargo is exiled to Cyprus, they cannot feel that terrorists, though condemned by the recognized Jewish organizations, are criminals in the simple sense of the word.

And the curfews, too, contribute to this attitude. Jews of Jerusalem may not formulate their reaction in so many words, but sitting cooped up in their homes night after night without prospect of early release, many of them cannot help but feel their hearts leap within them when they hear an explosion. It tells them that some Jews are out on the streets. To many, the sound of an explosion is the sound of the battle for freedom, and for the right to walk about freely. They feel bitter and sad that five hundred Jews in Poland were led to extermination by one German; many also feel bitter at having a whole city of Jews forced indoors for an indefinite period.

ON MANY occasions the authorities have stated that the curfews were imposed, not as punitive measures, but in order to facilitate the apprehension of terrorists. So far, to the best of my knowledge, the curfew in Jerusalem has led to no such captures. On the contrary, since the curfew has been imposed in the Jewish sections of Jerusalem and on the main highways, the number of acts of terrorism has increased. The curfew serves, in a way, as an invitation to the terrorists to come out and act, for during these hours they are certain that no casual civilians are about. Whoever is about is, to them, legitimate prey.

A recent incident cast some light on the purpose of the curfew from an unexpected quarter. When a group of correspondents, properly armed with curfew passes, gathered at the scene of an explosion, they were ordered taken away to be interviewed by the British officer in command of the patrolling units. He kept them until he received word that the residents of the house near the scene of the explosion had been properly screened and interrogated. Screening and questioning in such cases is only too frequently accompanied by the active use of rifle butts and similar persuasive measures; those to be screened are often lined up against a wall with their hands over their heads after having been searched for weapons. The officer explained that the presence of correspondents was likely to inhibit—"embarrass" he said—his troops. And he declared bluntly that they did not expect to find terrorists in that house, that it was only a measure to annoy the "ordinary Jew."

It is irrelevant that this officer, who on this occasion also indulged in some rank anti-Semitic remarks, was promptly relieved of his command. The basic function of the curfew remains the same whether the officer enforcing it admits it or not. Aside from its economic effect—which is also probably one of the real reasons for the imposition of the curfew—it serves to exasperate the mass of the peaceful people. Most significant are the morbid moods that accumulate as a result of being forced to live one life during

daylight and another during the night. Curfew becomes a tension and a fever of the night, something akin to the primitive instinct that shunned the outside world and sought shelter after dark.

Perhaps this is what the British are really after. This may be an effort to break the spirit of a people when other measures have failed to break it.

**W**ITH dawn, Jerusalem comes to life again. The pall lifts. The barbed-wire concertinas are removed from the intersections. The pulse of the city begins to beat. Small crowds gather where bombs exploded the previous night. The shattered glass is swept away, and in one store a glazier is already busy replacing the window panes. In the reassuring morning sun, it is difficult to connect the heaps of glass with the tension and the explosions during the night. People seem to exist on separate levels during the day and the night.

But there is no time to waste and soon the little crowds scatter to their work and to the cafés where, over their morning tea, they read the latest reports about the boatload of "illegal" immigrants that is being hounded by British destroyers.

## Construction, Not "War"

MOSCHE SMELANSKY

REHOVOT

**A**FTER the adjournment until December of the Palestine Conference in London, representatives of the Jewish Agency entered into "unofficial" discussions with members of the British government in an attempt to establish conditions that would permit the Agency to participate in the Conference when its sessions are resumed. Besides demanding the release of the interned Agency leaders as a preliminary condition [already achieved], the Agency apparently also demands that Jewish immigration into Palestine be allowed on a larger scale, and that Britain promise full political independence to Palestine Jewry. The Brit-

ish government, on its part, requests, first of all, that the Agency cooperate to the full in stamping out terrorism in Palestine.

Meanwhile, the date of the twenty-second Zionist Congress has definitely been fixed, and the election of delegates to the Congress has already taken place. It is this Congress, starting on the 9th of December, that will decide whether or not Zionists will participate in the London Conference.

The highest authority of the Zionist Organization between Congresses is the Inner Zionist Committee, and this body, in a session held in Jerusalem the morning after the Congress elections, strongly denounced the terrorist outrages, and again declared by a large majority of votes that the only solution of the Zionist problem would be political independence for Palestine Jewry. But in "reply" to the Committee's expression of disapproval, there came on that *very same day* an intensified renewal of terrorism, and innocent blood was shed like water.

Such has been the course of political events in Palestine on the eve of the Zionist Congress; and were it not for the light radiated on the Yishuv by the recent creation of fifteen new agricultural settlements, these days would have been very dark ones for us indeed.

**W**HAT are the fundamental problems that the coming Zionist Congress will have to decide and take a definite stand on? They are: (1) future political policy, which involves the decision whether or not to participate in the London Conference; (2) policy on colonization; (3) the immigration and land question. The Zionist achievement so far can be divided into two essentials, one political, the other colonizational. On the eve of the impending Congress, we can say without hesitation or reservation that as far as the political sphere is concerned Zionism has met with complete failure—whereas in that of colonization it has achieved great successes.

The balance sheet in brief of our political achievement is as follows: the widening and deepening of the Jewish-Arab chasm;



strained relations between the Zionist administration and the mandatory government, which have resulted in a tension that has the character almost of mutual animosity; and the present reign of Jewish terror in Palestine.

The balance sheet of Zionist colonial activity is: a population of 600,000; 2 million dunams of land; 315 agricultural settlements; a great host of workers in city and country; the creation of an industry; and a record of production that by 1945 had reached the value of hundreds of millions of English pounds.

The Jewish-Arab quarrel was not brought about by the Zionists alone. The Arabs started it out of envy and primitive ultra-nationalism, and under incitement from abroad, an incitement greatly intensified after 1935 by the agents of Fascism and Nazism, who succeeded in turning the conflict into something like prolonged warfare. Nevertheless, the leaders of Zionism have a big share in the responsibility for the increased dimensions of the quarrel—not so much in a positive as in a negative way. For they have made *no* effort to settle the quarrel and have not utilized the good opportunities given them for that end.

In 1935, before the outbreak of the Arab disturbances, such an opportunity was provided by High Commissioner Sir Arthur Wauchop's proposal to found Jewish-Arab independence in Palestine on the basis of *equality*. But the Zionist administration turned the proposition down. In 1936, at the very beginning of the disturbances, another opportunity was provided for a settlement by the understanding arrived at between Dr. Judah Magnes and his associates on the one side and responsible and influential Arab leaders on the other. But the Zionist administration also turned that down.

Then, upon the publication of the Royal Commission's proposal for partition, Arab leaders showed a sincere readiness to liquidate Jewish-Arab differences; but the Zionist Administration, which *knew* about this desire, let the opportunity drop. On the very

eve of the calamity that befell us at the Biltmore Hotel in New York in the adoption of the resolution demanding a Jewish state immediately, another *good* opportunity arose for a *fair compromise*, but it was again not taken advantage of. With the Biltmore resolution pouring oil on the flames of the Jewish-Arab dissension, direct Jewish-Arab pourparlers for a peaceful settlement of differences became almost impossible.

Now, all these failures befell us because we shut our eyes to reality—because in the Zionist offices in Rehavia, Tel Aviv, and New York, and among the broad masses of the Zionist public, people did not allow themselves a fair picture of Arab strength and greatly exaggerated our own.

It was likewise not the Zionists who began the Jewish-British conflict, but, unquestionably, the British. It was the British who drew up the White Paper, one of the most disgraceful documents of the period of "appeasement." But the Zionist leaders committed themselves to a fatal error by believing that they could break the White Paper by other means than peaceful political campaigning and the continuation of creative Zionist effort. They issued a call for "war," and appealed to physical "force"; they trained and incited Jewish youth in this country for these ends.

A year ago the Labor government proposed, as a temporary solution, to grant us 1,500 immigration certificates per month, and it seemed almost certain that it was prepared to increase them to 2,500 per month, and that it was also willing to instruct local authorities to relax the restrictions on Jewish purchases of land.

This was an intimation or hint of the eventual abolition of the White Paper. Who knows? Perhaps if we had not disdained this "hint" and not reacted against it by blowing up railways and bridges, and had not perpetrated the crime at the King David Hotel—in which some of our best men perished, as well as some of our best British and Arab friends—who knows but that we might have been now standing on the

threshold of that temporary solution, safe from the danger threatening us at present?

The Zionist leaders let drop all the opportunities to settle the Jewish-Arab conflict, and turned down the first offer of a compromise in the quarrel with the British simply because they hoped to grasp the maximum—but they have failed in that, too.

THE SOURCES of our success in colonization are not far to seek. They are to be found in the more traditional Zionist policy of constant *creation and construction*. This tradition can be traced without interruption from the days of Bilu down to the last *aliya* to the Negev; that policy was, is, and will be the backbone of the Zionist movement.

I do not know what the composition of the Diaspora representation and, particularly, of the American delegation at the Congress will be. But the composition of the delegation elected in Palestine does not promise any change for the better in our policy. The "war" cry had greater influence over the electorate than the admonition to patience, the call to constructive and creative effort, the traditional laborious road of the Zionist movement. However, should there be no change, should we continue to tread the tortuous path of "warfare," we shall—Heaven forbid—go from bad to worse. A Jewish "state" will not be our immediate lot, but utter ruin and destruction. For we are indeed quite likely to arrive at a state of real war on *two* fronts.

The fact that after a thirteen years' absence, the Revisionists are again returning to the Zionist Congress with their "war cry"—which in the interim has become the slogan of many—this fact promises nothing good.

Simply to insist on political sovereignty for a population that constitutes a minority in the country connotes in itself the rule of might. And one sin is sure to bring another in its train. Our present terrorists are the disciples of those who twenty years ago demanded "a state immediately." The results of the Congress elections in Palestine offer no hope of a change in this policy, but they

do at least give hope that our present *settlement* policy will be maintained—provided, however, that our "foreign" policy does not bring about its ruination.

ZIONIST settlement policy has given preference so far to agricultural colonization, that is, to the extent that the investment of Zionist funds is concerned. But private funds and means have always followed the line of least resistance, which is urban settlement. Of late, demands have been heard for a change of policy in the investment of the funds of the Zionist Organization; it is being asked that these, too, be diverted to the easier course and spent on urban development. "Industrialization" has now become the stirring slogan.

In spite of the great positive advantages of industrialization, especially in enhancing the Yishuv's absorptive capacity, let us not lose sight of present realities in Palestine.

Notwithstanding our great efforts in agriculture and the satisfactory results obtained, that department of our economy is still quite far from fulfilling all its functions and duties. By now it supplies the Yishuv with most of its primary necessities in food: milk, eggs, vegetables, and fruits. Nevertheless, it does not as yet provide even *one-fifth* of the bread, meat, oil, and fats we consume. These we must still obtain from abroad, from neighboring countries, or from afar. And whenever bread, meat, or oil does not arrive on time, the Yishuv is seized with the dread of hunger. This is a quite impossible situation, and it has to be radically changed. For the time being, the principal Zionist funds must still be poured into agricultural colonization. For private money will in any case not go to the country.

The Palestinian delegates to the Congress, 60 per cent of whom come from the ranks of labor, will doubtless support the policy of rural settlement regardless of variant political views. An appreciable portion of the so-called "middle-class" delegates, barring Revisionists and their "shield-bearers," will also vote for this policy.

It is unquestionably incumbent upon us

to develop our industry, and especially to assure markets for it, so as to prevent the dreadful eventuality of having production exceed demand. Private initiative, however, should and doubtless would care for that. Public initiative must as before direct itself principally towards the land.

**A**BOUT immigration there is no difference of opinion in the Yishuv or in the Zionist Organization at large. The British government has indeed sinned greatly by closing the gates of our country to us. It should be admitted, however, that the problem of immigration is not an easy one under present conditions. For while the forebodings we had about the transition from wartime to peacetime conditions have fortunately only been confirmed in part—and even that part is being compensated for in some measure by the pronounced gains made in the citrus industry—nevertheless, what happened to our metal trades with the close of the war, and to the diamond industry more recently, may happen any day to our other industries.

Meanwhile, the high cost of production, deriving from the high cost of living, weighs heavily upon us. And the high cost of living derives in turn from the shortcomings of our rural colonization and from our low efficiency.

Another limiting factor upon Jewish immigration to Palestine is the rather low capacity for work manifested so far by the new immigrants, obviously due to their life during their exile in the "camps" of devastated Europe.

All this must not be lost sight of, and we must prepare for every eventuality. Nevertheless, the recommendation of the Anglo-American Committee that hundreds of thousands of refugees be admitted to Palestine still stands in full force as something that ought to be complied with. To be sure, it is not practicable to do this at one stroke, as certain individuals propose. It can only be achieved gradually, in the course of a year or a year and a half. The thousands of refugee children, however, could all

come at once, for the Yishuv can absorb and assimilate *them* with little difficulty.

Immigration from the "camps," however, is not enough in itself for the building up of the Yishuv. To absorb and assimilate these immigrants, the Yishuv must have reinforcements from countries that were not seriously devastated by the war. This means America in particular. This immigration must be composed of *halutzim* and also of capital. Unless such immigration takes place, the Yishuv will find it very hard to stand the strain and carry on.

With respect to the land problem, there are likewise no divergences of opinion in the Zionist camp the world over. Land is, was, and will always be the very soul of the Zionist movement. The British government took upon itself a heavy sin indeed by establishing the "Land Law," which smacks of the Nuremberg Laws because it distinguishes between two brother peoples living in one and the same country. We Jews do not wish to be endowed with superior rights in our country, nor do we want the privilege of domination. On the other hand, we certainly do refuse to be relegated to inferiority.

*Equality* between the two peoples of Palestine with respect to all their rights, political, social, or economic, and *only* equality will free us from distress and put us upon the broad and open highway of salvation and redemption.

**I**S IT possible or permissible, when everything is so fraught with danger, to delay a settlement with the British and Arabs and hold out for an iota of "prestige"?

I do not by any means speak of a *final* settlement or solution. That is impossible under present circumstances, with neither the situation nor the generation—Jewish and Arab alike—trained or educated for it. Nor is the required training and education a thing to be effected by the stroke of a magic wand. It is just here that the heaviest guilt of the Jewish Agency lies—in striving for a final settlement at this precise and particular hour.

But a *temporary solution* must be at the top of the agenda. It is absolutely indispensable. For we cannot go on without a solution that will turn us from the paths of adventurism and restore the life of creative labor that made the Yishuv grow, and which can alone offer Zionism the balm of life.

The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry worked out a desirable solution, but all parties concerned spurned it because of the narrowness of their conceptions, the wildness of their imaginations, and the vanity of their ambitions.

But even before this Committee was brought into being, the Labor government had guardedly suggested its provisional solution—a solution not so good or so complete as that of the Anglo-American Committee, but nevertheless a kind of beginning. We in our impatience kicked it overboard.

Late as the hour is, it is not altogether too late. Let us not chase after the wind in the fields; let us not seek the unrealizable and the excessive; let us content ourselves with less than the maximum: and let us save all that can be saved.

For that "basis"—a Jewish "statelette" established by partition—to which the Jewish Agency aspires, and which constitutes the rock of dissension between it and the British government, is not *viable*. Partition with

its "statelette" is opposed by considerable sections of all Zionist parties and the Yishuv—possibly by a *majority* of the Jews of Palestine. And it is opposed by *all* the Arabs of Palestine.

**N**O, THIS is not the time for a final solution; we must strive with all our strength toward a merely temporary one. Let us seek this: the continuation of the British Mandate; freedom of acquisition of land by Jews throughout Palestine, along with the strict protection of the fellah's and tenant's small but adequate holdings; gradual but steady development and enlargement of self-government in towns, settlements, and villages; expansion of the system of government committees on which Jews, Arabs, and British would serve in common, to the legislative as well as the economic sphere; increasing participation of Jews and Arabs in the administration of the country, from the lowest to the highest offices.

This temporary solution is possible right now, and it palpably offers benefits and blessings to all concerned. If we seek it, we shall attain it. As for the final solution, let us leave that to the future and to a generation educated for it. It is with the training and education of such a generation that we must concern and occupy ourselves from this very moment.



## MODERN MAN'S ANXIETY: ITS REMEDY

### *Do We Face a New Crisis or a Chronic Malady?*

LOUIS FINKELSTEIN

**T**WENTY-FIVE centuries of philosophical study and argument have deepened our insight into the problem of the individual. But so far as alternatives are concerned, we stand today where we stood in the days of Aristotle. Either each life is part of a significant process, and therefore is itself significant, or it is meaningless and futile. If the individual accepts the first alternative, which is the answer offered by Prophetic and Rabbinic Judaism, he finds a solution. If he does not, he seems destined to remain perplexed and confused.

The crisis of the individual in our time is created by our realization of this inescap-

able dilemma, and by our failure to face it. Men want to have significance but are unable or unwilling to pay the price in moral responsibility. The crisis is epitomized in the individual citizen of the Western countries who hungers for the self-esteem and freedom associated with democracy but will not assume the self-discipline and obligations his citizenship involves.

#### The Primacy of the Group

THE roots of the crisis of the individual in our time go deep. Western man (whose culture is spreading over the world, involving all mankind in his crisis) belongs to an aggressive power-culture. We fail to recognize this, for few of us know enough about other cultures to see our own in perspective. Just as the ancient naively believed that God spoke his dialect, so we presume that our peculiar characteristics are part of "human nature" and cannot be altered or eradicated. But modern anthropology has discovered many cultures widely different from our own, and entirely lacking our aggressiveness. (That such cultures, with their stress on quietism and self-effacement, would fail to spread, was perhaps inevitable.) Ruth Benedict describes the culture of the Zunis, one such group, as follows:

"Personal authority is perhaps the most vigorously disparaged trait in Zuni. . . . The ideal man in Zuni is a person of dignity and affability who has never tried to lead, and who has never called forth comment from his neighbors. Any conflict, though all the right is on his side, is held against him. Even in contests of skill like their foot-races, if a man wins habitually he is debarred from running."

In the Western world a person possessing such traits and holding such views is sus-

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pected—often rightly—of neurosis. This is because Western society inculcates from birth the very qualities the Zuni condemns.

This aggressiveness of Western man would long ago have led to his extinction through mutual murder had there not developed in primitive times a sense of family, clan, and group unity. But the other side of the coin was that primitive Western man concentrated particular ferocity on those beyond his immediate group. By the dawn of civilization, he had created a series of societies, each regarded by its members as the goal of all existence.

The emotional identification of one's immediate group with the world was often reinforced by *unawareness* of existence outside the group. Thus when their native villages were destroyed, the daughters of Lot concluded that all humanity had perished. Intellectual narrowness combined with personal predilection to submerge the individual, to suppress his personality, and to over-value the collective personality of the group.

As the pastoral age gave way to the agricultural and the agricultural to the urban, the individual broke through the intellectual and emotional barriers that prevented his seeing the world outside his clan. He began to know, respect, and even love people beyond his kinship group, and he could no longer regard the welfare of his clan as his sole goal in life.

### The Birth of the Individual

THE discovery of people different from himself led Western man to discover (or perhaps to rediscover) himself. He became aware of his "ego" in a sense unknown to his ancestors. For David, death had no sting. He expected, when he died, to be gathered "unto his family," where he always wanted to be. He was sure that there could be no better culmination of life than to sleep with one's fathers. But his descendants considered an eternity in the semi-darkness of the *Sheol*, even in the company of their forefathers, far from blissful.

If, however, life among one's kin was not the *summum bonum*, and if one's clan was

not the climax of all creation, what was? How could one face the tragedy of life and its swift inexorable end, when the process had lost its meaning with the discovery that there were real and respectable worlds outside the group?

The townsman of the seventh century B.C.E. knew that his clan and family were themselves transient and mortal. The breakdown of clan allegiance, and the consequent lack of opportunity to work off aggression on other clans, compelled the child of Western culture to express his aggressiveness entirely in his personal life. No longer able to believe in an endless succession of "victories" for his clan, he had to seek them for himself. The Cynics and the Cyrenaics of ancient Greece were the first to formulate the newly directed impulse in philosophical terms.

The individual and the satisfaction of his desires became the final goal of existence. What happens to man when he tries to justify his existence in terms of himself is expressed in the Book of Ecclesiastes in the Hebrew Scriptures:

"I said in my heart, 'Come now, I will try thee with mirth and enjoy pleasure.'" Finding this vanity, the author says, "I turned myself to behold wisdom. . . . Then I said in my heart that this also is vanity. For of the wise man as of the fool there is no remembrance forever, seeing that in the days to come all will long ago have been forgotten. And how must the wise man die? Even as the fool. . . . So I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun was grievous unto me; for all is vanity and striving after wind."

Living in a power culture, Western civilized man has discovered the futility of the clan as a power unit, and is also painfully aware of his own evanescence. *The crisis of the individual today consists in man's inability to give meaning to his life in terms of a group, and his recognition that to give it meaning in terms of himself is an illusion.*

So there is the curious paradox that Western civilization can make men comfortable, but not happy.

Normally unhappy, they have continually to be comforted. Pleasure, knowledge, fame, power . . . all have failed to give meaning to men's lives. That they can find no better analysis of their problem, nor greater solace for their troubles than the Books of Job and Ecclesiastes, composed more than two thousand years ago, is itself evidence that the crisis is not new. It is not dependent on specifically modern conditions. It is one of the chronic spiritual diseases of Western civilization itself. Man, becoming aware of himself, is haunted by a sense of inevitable and ultimate frustration, personal and universal doom, and by a certainty of future tragedy that Nature has generously concealed from lesser forms of life.

No one has more forcefully expressed this gnawing despair than Bertrand Russell in his famous essay, "A Free Man's Worship":

" . . . That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his lives and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labors of the age, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand." But, parenthetically, no philosophy built on them has as yet shown any capacity to stand.

Some modern psychiatrists, notably Karen Horney in *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, take the position that the neurotic and the healthy person in our society are subject to the same underlying conflicts, and ask what conditions in our culture make neuroses center about *particular* conflicts and not others.

But the psychiatrists do not choose to ask a further question: Why is it that our

culture creates such conflicts that virtually none of us can be said to be in good health, and that neurotics are but extreme examples of conditions to which all of us are subject? I submit that economic conditions and the structure of society, the particular situations around which Karen Horney says conflicts center, while profoundly significant, are by no means the whole, or even the most important elements in the crisis of the individual today.

The development of the competitiveness of our culture to such a degree as to make some insane and nearly everyone unhappy is itself a symptom of a more profound spiritual malady. It reflects our failure to find an emotional equivalent for the ancient clan, which in its time gave its members what Josiah Royce used to call "a sense of being at home in the Universe."

Modern man has lost the security of the primitive myth, but he has not accepted the religious insights in which alone he can feel at home. He has rejected the legend, but cannot rise to the truth. A spiritual vagabond, he is frightened at the loneliness he has created for himself. His efforts to transform his own creations—his business, his trade union, his political party, his club, his city, and finally his country—into new gods are feeble and pathetic. He is too mature for effective self-deception, and will not rise to the maturity where delusion is unnecessary. He knows that "patriotism is not enough," but he refuses to admit that which is.

As in other emotional troubles, we may not ourselves be able to diagnose what is making us unhappy. We may project our misery on the lack of educational advantages, on poverty, on our families. Essentially the trouble lies in the sense of insecurity that comes from knowing that we are sentenced to "being as though we had not been."

### The Suffering Servant of God

TRADITIONAL Judaism's answer to this deepest of human problems—an answer that has been adopted by Western religions—is to resolve the paradox of man's misery by two

basic insights: the spiritual background of the cosmos, and the spiritual nature of man.

Traditional Judaism recognizes that the family, clan, tribe, and nation cannot serve as ends logically justifying the "blood, sweat, and tears" of individual existence. But God can. It is absurd to experience the travail that life so frequently entails, ending in ultimate dissolution, for the sake of any group—itsself transient. But it is not absurd to do so for the sake of the All and the Eternal. If the Divine purpose is fulfilled through suffering, then, as Rabbi Akiba said, "Suffering is welcome."

In other words, Judaism accepts both the dynamism of Western man and his tendency toward submissiveness and cooperation as authentic and natural expressions of his humanity. It holds that both can be fulfilled, in harmony with reality, if our discovery of ourselves and of the world proceed simultaneously.

The emotions evoked in the primitive by the clan and its patron deity are irrational only because the conception is too limited. It should be expanded to include all mankind and all existence. The man who sees in life only an opportunity to advance the fortunes of his clan faces disappointment when his eyes are opened to its transient nature and relative unimportance. "But he that trusteth in the Lord can never be moved," not because he is immune from the accidents of life, but because they are relatively insignificant for him. His life is part of a transcendent Existence in which time and space have no meaning.

This doctrine is most eloquently formulated in the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah, the part usually known as the Second Isaiah. Appropriately enough, the author of these chapters is anonymous, for he taught that man must live only in terms of service to God. Man can, he held, reject power, wealth, joy, and posthumous fame as ends of life. Both the individual and the group have meaning as the Suffering Servants of the All. Says the second Isaiah:

*Behold, My servant shall prosper*

*He shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.*

*According as many were appalled at thee—  
So marred was his visage unlike that of a man,*

*And his form unlike that of the sons of men. . . .*

*He was despised, and forsaken of men,  
A man of pains, and acquainted with disease.  
And as one from whom men hide their face:  
He was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

*Surely our diseases he did bear, and our pains he carried;*

*Whereas we did esteem him stricken,  
Smitten of God, and afflicted.*

*But he was wounded because of our transgressions.*

*He was crushed because of our iniquities;  
The chastisement of our welfare was upon him,*

*And with his stripes we were healed. . . .*

*Yet it pleased the Lord to crush him by disease;*

*To see if his soul would offer itself in restitution,*

*That he might see his seed, prolong his days,  
And that the purpose of the Lord might prosper by his hand:*

*Of the travail of his soul he shall see to the full, even My servant,*

*Who by his knowledge did justify the Righteous One to the many,  
And their iniquities he did bear.*

*Therefore will I divide him a portion among the great,*

*And he shall divide the spoil with the mighty;*

*Because he bared his soul unto death,  
And was numbered with the transgressors;  
Yet he bore the sin of many,  
And made intercession for the transgressors. . . .*

**An Everyday Ideal for Everyman**

THIS passage, like most prophecy, is ad-



dressed to *everyone*. The Prophet tells how the tragedies of life must be interpreted if they are not to crush man and if they are to purify him. So difficult is it to rise to this level that virtually all commentators read the passage either as a description of a cosmic sacrifice—the portrait of God, but of God turned man—the Christian view; or as a portrait of Israel as a people, or of the Messiah—the prevailing Jewish view. Rashi, alone among the famous commentators, realized that the Prophet is portraying an ideal man indeed; but the ideal which he expects the *common man* ultimately to fulfill. The selflessness that will redeem the world, he holds, cannot be the selflessness of a redeemer alone: it must be the selflessness of men generally.

Selflessness is not negative and static. It does not reject the impulse to create, to build, to progress, even to dominate. But it is as soldiers in the army of the Lord that men may seek domination. The object of man's domination should not be his neighbor or his fellow-man, within or outside of his tribe.

The ideal leader of Biblical and Rabbinic teaching, therefore, like Moses, shuns office. Even at the behest of God, he is loath to accept leadership. "Alas for leadership," reads one Rabbinic text, "that it buries its possessors." "Love work and hate office," was the favorite maxim of Shemayah, the teacher of Hillel.

But while one may flee office, one must not shirk duty and service. "You seem to think," said Rabban Gamaliel II, to two men whom he had appointed and who declined to serve, "that I am bestowing office on you. On the contrary, it is service that I am imposing on you."

But how is one to escape self-deception? How can one prevent rationalization from masking the will to power as a will to serve?

In the first place, so far as its own organization is concerned, Rabbinic Judaism has consistently resisted all efforts to identify office with authority. It encourages dissent and deviation. There never has been and, so long as Judaism remains true to itself, there

never can be a Synagogue as there is a Church. The votes of majorities are not binding on minorities, if the latter genuinely and with reason hold their views as the authentic tradition of Israel. Whether one view or another is to prevail is in the last analysis left to the "community of Israel," the successive generations of Jews, primarily to the consensus of scholars among them. The excommunication of the Hasidic movement by so distinguished a scholar and saint as Rabbi Elijah Gaon of Vilna did not prevent hundreds of thousands of Jews from remaining Hasidim. Nor did excommunication of the works of Maimonides by leading rabbis prevent his *Guide for the Perplexed* and other philosophical works from becoming classics of the Jewish faith. The great schisms in Judaism—the break with the Samaritans in the fourth century B.C.E., and with the Karaites in the seventh century, were ratified, as it were, by a consensus of later generations.

However, the more basic and universal issue of man's inherent urge to power is dealt with by the doctrine of human immortality.

### Power and Man's Immortality

HAVING bestowed on the individual meaning in terms of the Unending, the Omnipotent, and the Omnipresent, Judaism developed another insight—the doctrine that man himself is essentially a soul and not a body, just as God is a transcendent Spirit and not the material Universe. To the traditional Jew life resembles a school. The whole life-process has as its aim the instruction, improvement, and ennobling of the individual, and of the human race. The pains, sorrows, and disappointments of school—even the inevitable distress of separation from accustomed surroundings—must be taken in one's stride, for they cannot be weighed in a balance against the serious values attaching to the educational experience. Man can leave the world, Judaism holds, a better being than he entered it, if his life develops to the full his spiritual potentialities, and if he has helped to make the world better. To the

degree that he achieves this, his life is a "success."

The doctrine that man lives to fulfill a cosmic purpose is by no means inconsistent with the doctrine that he lives to perfect his own soul. The two beliefs are in fact supplementary. Man fulfills himself as a spiritual being when he helps fulfill the will of God; he helps fulfill the will of God when he fulfills himself as a spiritual being.

Hillel summarized both doctrines in his famous apothegm: "If I do not belong to myself, who belongs to me; yet if I belong to myself alone, what am I? And if not now, when?" If the individual assays his value in any terms other than those of his own perfection and the immortality of his spirit, what is left for him to possess? Yet if he regards his being as nothing more than a process of self-perfection, what is he, after all? It is only when he recognizes that his self-perfection is the fulfillment of God's will that this goal becomes meaningful. And, concludes Hillel, if this is not achieved now—in mundane existence—when will it be achieved?

In Rabbinic Judaism, the belief that man is essentially spiritual generally takes the form of the assertion that he is immortal or that the dead will be resurrected to immortal life. Beyond making this basic statement, Rabbinic Judaism declines to accept any more responsibility for the metaphysics of immortality than it does for the metaphysics of Divinity.

But the metaphysical description of immortality, and particularly its translation into the imagery of daily life, is a vital technique for directing men's minds from physical and mundane power to spiritual and eternal perfection.

Granted a civilization with a bias for self-expression and success, Judaism undertakes to direct man's mature intellect to the conception of service to God, and to train his emotions, from the cradle, to find his success in an immortality that transcends anything he sees in the world.

The long martyrdom of the Jewish people could not have been endured if generation

after generation of Jewish mothers had not inculcated in their babies a profound hunger for "success"—but in a world where the "high will be low, and the low will be high." It was not only that on the comparatively rare occasions of severe persecution, Jews preferred death to apostasy, but that in day-by-day existence most of them preferred failure while Jews to success as apostates.

### The Way to Immortality

Thus it was that through twenty centuries, Judaism's best minds devoted themselves to its study and not to worldly success. Maimonides, whose brilliance might have made him one of the foremost physicians of all history, spent the ten most effective years of his life preparing a code of Jewish law. Such devotion was not developed by metaphysical or theological studies. It was developed in the child before he learned to speak, in the years when most children of the West are inoculated with hunger for worldly prestige and power.

To aid in this teaching, the immortality of the soul was described by the Rabbinic homilists in a series of metaphors, helpful to the unsophisticate, though sometimes disturbing to the semi-sophisticate. The latter has learned just enough to question the definition of spirituality by one of its functions—namely, timelessness—and yet not enough to understand that the use of a simplified definition does not invalidate the conception. The metaphysical description of immortality thus served to confuse many who might have recognized man's inherent spirituality and Divine character, but could not accept the naive picture of a paradise that was just an endless entertainment.

The main issue in the long struggle about Maimonides' interpretation of Judaism concerned his insistence that the basic conception of immortality must be freed, at least for the thinkers and guides of Judaism, from its metaphysical, metaphorical, and mythical trammels. He denied that the "bliss of the life hereafter" can be properly portrayed in terms intelligible to living men, for "the spiritual bliss is unsearchable and

is without analogue in the physical world."

In the Jewish conception of the human personality, immortality is not a bribe to entice man away from sin. The Jewish sage may, in a moment of relaxation, regale his hearers with stories of the feast of Leviathan and the wine preserved from the six days of Creation, with pictures of Ephraim and Menasseh dancing, and David playing the lute at a great cosmic entertainment for the righteous. But the ancient Pharisee warns, "Do not say, I will study the Torah so that I may become rich, or so that I may be called Rabbi, or so that I may acquire the reward of the eternal world. But love the Lord thy God—all that thou doest must be only for love of Him." He was as impatient of the man who collected meritorious deeds to exchange them for everlasting rewards as is a university teacher of the student who works for credits. Paradise is a "reward" in the sense that knowledge is the reward of study, good health the reward of hygiene, perfection in art the reward of painstaking effort. Man, born potentially immortal, can attain immortality if he concentrates his efforts on the basic objectives of life—the service of God and the perfection of his character.

To long for this kind of immortality—the only kind man can achieve—he must be able to transcend himself. Only the saintly will look forward to an eternity in which the only bliss is that of "enjoying the glory of the Divine Presence." But for such saints, "one hour of the bliss of the future life is preferable to all the life of this world," as "one hour spent in repentance and good deeds in this world is better than the whole life of the future." For the hour of repentance and good deeds is the hour of achievement, of growth; the future life is the period of maturity.

For such selfless men the immortal life is real in expectation. It will also be real in fact. Their physical pains in this world will not be balanced by physical pleasures in the next; rather will their ability to defy and despise suffering reach a climax in the spirituality of the future, in which there is a complete transcendence of self—again in

the words of Maimonides, "existence in the existence of God."

Having renounced himself and become absorbed in the service of God and his fellow-man, the individual becomes an immortal being. Immortality is a necessary attribute of such saintliness and of nothing else. And every human being is capable of attaining this saintliness, and therefore of immortality.

There are thus more who attain immortality than we suspect, and most of them are probably to be found among the plain people.

Judaism holds that the righteous of the peoples of the world will attain immortality by virtue of their observance of the basic ethical commandments—the so-called laws of the sons of Noah. The Rabbis hoped that ultimately "all Israel will have a share in the world to come, for it is written, 'And Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land forever.' " Thus immortality was not to be the prerogative of any group of men. It was the privilege which God granted to all those created in His image.

### Judaism and The Social Order

THEIR recognition that immortality is indispensable if man is to cope with his own power impulse (without losing his dynamism) did not prevent the Rabbinic scholars from realizing the grave perils to the moral life inherent in "otherworldliness." They knew all too well that for centuries Prophets, Psalmists, and scholars had resisted all efforts to integrate the doctrine of the resurrection in Judaism. There is no mention of man's immortal soul in Jeremiah or Ezekiel. There is all but explicit denial of it in many Psalms. To this day the Jewish liturgy for the holidays contains the Psalm that says, "the heavens are the heavens of the Lord; and the earth hath He given to the sons of men. The dead shall not praise the Lord, nor yet they that descend to the netherworld."

The long unwillingness to make immortality of the spirit a cardinal principle in Judaism was due primarily to apprehension that the doctrine might lead to ancestor worship and polytheism or daemonism. But in

men of deepest insight it probably aroused fears for the developments that actually have occurred—namely, the use of the doctrine itself to diminish the resistance of the weak rather than to restrain the greed of the strong. “Agnosticism could not exist,” a group of Hasidim once remarked to their rabbi, “unless God had created it. But why did He create doubt of His own existence in men’s minds?” “Agnosticism, too,” the rabbi replied, “has its uses. When one’s friend is in distress, it is tempting to rely on Providence to help him. Agnosticism is needed to meet that emergency and to help one over that temptation.”

Unfortunately for mankind it has not always worked that way. The belief in immortality has even been widely used to prevent mass efforts to improve human life. However, the whole of Jewish religious history is an effort to prevent the Kingdom of Heaven of the future from overshadowing the need for the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. “Man is political by nature,” says Maimonides, quoting Aristotle, and bases his interpretation of the Law on that maxim. The perfection of man as a spiritual being, Rabbinic Judaism insists, cannot be attained unless the social structure is made to conform to the needs of this process. The saint is not the man who withdraws from the world, but the man who faces it and its weaknesses. To be sure, Rabbi Akiba taught that “poverty is becoming to Israel as a red strap to a white horse.” Yet, like a whole line of predecessors and successors, he devoted his life to a study of the laws by which poverty might be prevented from spreading, and wealth from becoming oppressive.

Accepting the principle of immortality, Rabbinic Judaism did not break with the tradition of social justice expounded in prophecy, or with the constitutional provisions for the protection of the weak and the equalizing of power found in the Torah. The contempt for earthly goods necessary to produce a Rashi or a Rabbenu Tam did not prevent their becoming effective judges who protected the earthly interests of others. Paradoxically, Rabbinic Judaism teaches man

to despise the mundane life where he is himself concerned, but to respect it where world polity and the community are concerned. The affairs of this world are insignificant as a basis of value, but they are our means to express our spirituality.

In their struggle against the injustices of the world, the Jewish scholars and saints continued the tradition that the Prophets had initiated. An aggrieved person, unable to obtain redress in the regularly constituted courts, could, for example, interrupt public prayers until his case was properly studied. This passion for human equality and social justice, so integral to all Jewish tradition, was a necessary balance to the other-worldliness suggested by theological dogma.

Yet throughout their emphasis on the importance of overcoming social and individual injustice, the Rabbinic scholars never forgot that the social order and its institutions are not ends, but means. Social reform is important because it leads to the betterment of man; it is not a goal in itself.

The social units—the family, the group, the people of Israel itself—are collective “servants of God.” To regard service to them as final goals is indeed folly, as Western men have discovered; but as means of increased service they are indispensable. Israel is the Suffering Servant *par excellence*. Its unique place in the world derives from the fact that it suffers and to that extent serves more than the rest. The Messianic age that will ultimately come, and which will bring redemption to Israel, will also bring redemption to all mankind. No longer suffering, Israel will still remain the servant.

### The Crisis of Our Time

RABBINIC Judaism’s approach to life is thus entirely at odds with some of the dominant impulses of Western culture. It considers living in terms of mundane success sheerest folly. It holds that life must be judged by its creativity and its acceptance of God and the spirit of man as final ends. It denounces as hardly better than idolatry the passion for the glorification of certain insti-



tutions, groups, and even nations. It therefore sees nothing unreasonable in its demand that each of us live a life of service, subordinating personal desire to the will of God, the perfection of his soul, and the improvement of the social order. If adherence to Judaism makes one a member of a minority, and being a member of a minority entails suffering, that does not seem to Rabbinic Judaism any reason for considering the possibility of assimilation. The only possible question (and a question that admitted of no doubt to Rabbinic Judaism) is whether, having been born a Jew, one can serve God, the community, and the cause of self-perfection better by remaining in the faith than by leaving it. Judaism of course believes that the opportunities for such service for those who are born within it are incomparably greater, under any possible conditions, if they remain devoted and loyal.

For those born outside its fold, Rabbinic Judaism believes that complete salvation is possible within their own faiths. Following the suggestion implied in Scripture, which finds a place for the prophecies of Balaam in the Pentateuch, Rabbinic Judaism maintains that the heathen Sage was originally granted Divine inspiration equal to that of Moses himself—a privilege denied to any other prophet in Israel. The Talmud further maintains that an acceptance and observance of moral principles set down in the Ten Commandments makes anyone not born within the Jewish faith a member of the "righteous of the peoples of the world," whose destiny is in Paradise with the saints of Israel themselves.

Few of us in this generation can so far rise above the influence of our times as to be able to respond emotionally to the Rabbinic premise. Even fewer master sufficient philosophy or theology to attach meaning to such terms as "spiritual" or "personality." Many have an emotional block, which prevents the understanding of philosophical and theological truth, somewhat like the block that prevents so many adolescents from grasping the elementary truths about their own emotional life.

The crisis that this situation creates in Judaism is part of the crisis that the trend it represents creates for civilization as a whole. Judaism cannot survive if its adherents accept the pagan doctrine that worldly success is a worthwhile goal, but neither can Western civilization generally.

### The Sole Escape

EVENTS have demonstrated that the contemporary emotional reversion to paganism, coupled with our intellectual development, places us precisely in the position of the Athenian of the sixth century before the Christian era.

The average thoughtful, educated man today is really a sceptic who cannot lose himself in a clan, but cannot find himself in God. He tries to justify his life by itself, but as a material rather than a spiritual process. He tries the search for pleasure, power, prestige, and posthumous fame, and finds them again all vanity of vanities.

The neo-paganism that has developed through the ignoring or rejection of the postulates of the spirituality of man and of the cosmos has, in our generation, had the most devastating effects on the whole world. A nation capable of leading the world in civilization gave itself over to the leadership of a mad demagogue, ruining itself and all but ruining mankind. One of the results of the war has been the invention of weapons even more lethal than those man previously possessed—weapons that may lead to the extermination of the whole human race. Neither the invention of new weapons, nor the advances of natural science, nor the increase of men's power over one another through further discoveries in social science, can save us from this fate. There is only one escape, namely, abandoning the struggle for domination.

How can this struggle for domination be ended unless men generally accept the Second Isaiah's doctrine that man exists for God, and the Pharisaic postulate that each man is potentially an immortal spirit?

What answer has our generation to the radar-controlled plane or the atomic bomb

other than that given to the problem of the individual by the Scriptures and the Talmud:

"This world is a corridor leading to the future world. Prepare yourself in the corridor, so that you can enter the palace."

"What in man leads to life? Dying unto himself. What in man leads to death? Living unto himself."

"Give Him from what is His, for you and all you have are His."

"Just as the owner of a fig tree watches each of his many fruits, and whenever one becomes ripe, he picks it, lest it fall to earth and decay; so the Holy One, blessed be He, knows His righteous children and watches them; when they are ripe enough for His treasury, He garners them."

"Beloved is man, that he was created in the image of God. Especial love was shown him, in that he knows that he is created in the image of God."

Made in the image of God, capable of eternity, inherently spiritual, man must be protected against the infringement of his

rights by his fellows or by the community. But he has more than rights; he also has duties. In the great Jewish codes, as in the Bible and the Talmud, the rights of man are described in great detail; but so, too, are his obligations. Of all of these the primary obligation is to act as becomes a creature who bears the Divine image, and who can, if he so desires, attain to the status of an immortal.

In the welter of programs for humanity, that of ancient Judaism contains elements that remain uniquely significant. Judaism stresses the improvement not of the externalities of life, but of life itself; not of man's environment, but of man. It suggests no rejection of the urge to power over the world, but only of the urge to power over men.

Traditional Judaism thus reveals both the challenge and the opportunities of life. Besides human beings, no others can attain the dignity that man can attain through his effort at self-perfection. "I have set before thee," Moses warns mankind, "life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life."

# THE MONTH IN HISTORY

## Status of the Struggle

IN THE struggle between totalitarianism and democracy, there were significant developments on both sides. And the struggle within the forces of democracy, between the American tendency to fight totalitarianism with a static capitalism and the British tendency to fight it with democratic socialism, was sharpening.

The city of Berlin in 1946 was the spearhead of Western dissent against the Eastern glacier. It was deep in the Soviet zone of Germany but divided into four zones supervised by the four occupying powers. In October, Berlin held its first postwar municipal election. The campaign was carried on with flagrant discrimination against all non-Communist parties. But the results were an overwhelming victory for the Social Democrats and a correspondingly overwhelming defeat for the Communists. Even in the Soviet zone, the results were shocking to the Soviet strategists who had hoped to make the forced dissolution of Socialist parties into Communist parties a pattern for all of Europe.

That the results of this election demonstrated German abhorrence for the Communists was obvious and widely noted. Equally obvious but less noted was the fact that the results demonstrated German opposition to capitalism as well. Only a fraction of the electors voted for the Liberal party, which preferred a conservative program. And

In this regular department, SIDNEY HERTZBERG seeks to provide an objective and unpartisan report of the news of the world in its relationship to Jewish affairs. He brings to this task the perspective gained by years of study of the stuff of history, and lengthy experience as a news analyst and editor with *Current History*, *Time*, *Common Sense*, and the *New York Times*. Mr. Hertzberg was born in New York City and attended the Experimental College at the University of Wisconsin.

to the overwhelming vote for the anti-capitalist Social Democratic party, there had to be added some votes for the Christian Democratic party, which had a strong anti-capitalist left wing.

But the Germans, having declared themselves for democratic socialism, were unfortunately in no position to achieve it. They were blocked by the stupidities of the Potsdam Declaration and the continuing blindness of the occupying powers. There were signs, however, of clearer vision. The first problem was to revive Germany's economy. Nothing but political and social chaos could come out of a Germany that was simply an economic vacuum. On October 22, Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin announced that Britain would sponsor the socialization of the principal industries in its zone of Germany.

However, no economic reconstruction of Germany would make sense without its unification.

This had been resisted by both the Russians and the French. The Soviet Union, apparently despairing of integrating its zone of Germany completely into its orbit, pursued a policy of looting its zone of human and mechanical resources on the basis of its own interpretations of the Potsdam agreement.

But here again there seemed to be clearer vision. Early in December, Great Britain and the United States signed an agreement for the economic unification of their two zones, which would make the areas self-sufficient.

## No Decision in France

On November 10 France also held elections, this time for the first national assembly under its new constitution. France, no longer a maker of trends, remained a reflection of Europe's contending forces. The Communists raised their popular vote from 26.2 per cent to 28.2 per cent; the Popular Republicans, a Catholic party with both rightist

and leftist elements, declined from 28.1 per cent to 26 per cent. The Socialists' vote fell from 21.1 per cent to 17.9 per cent. France was divided and static. It would probably remain so until the forces operating to its east and west resolved their conflict.

### **Status Quo in the U. S.**

Least important and least unexpected in their results were the November elections in the United States. The election was, in effect, a defeat for a fifth term for Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose personality and record were made the basis of the Democratic campaign.

In determining the significance of the election, the unrealities of the American political scene had to be considered. Whatever solutions the Democratic and Republican parties offered to the crucial issues facing the country were essentially the same. It was difficult to find differences even on subsidiary issues. Even within the Democratic party, New Dealers offered little that was different from what regular Democrats had offered. Nor did the Republicans advocate repeal of New Deal reforms. They never had. They had always confined themselves to attacking inefficiency in the administration of reforms.

All this was borne out after the election. The Republicans revealed that their principal passion was tax reduction, a feeling shared by President Truman and advocated most vigorously in Congress by a Democratic Senator, Harry F. Byrd. And the announced intention of some Republican legislators to support restrictions on labor unions was no more than what some Democrats advocated. To regard the election as a turn to the Right implied that a Democratic victory would have meant a turn to the Left or the continuance of a policy substantially different from the Republican policy. Neither implication was justified.

But the principal unreality in designating the election as a turn to the Right was the fact that no Left alternative had been offered. The Left was a coherent, organized force in the politics of all other Western nations. In the United States the Left was atomized.

Substantially, the 1946 elections left America in political status quo and for that reason any significance they had was negative.

### **The Socialist Alternative**

In Britain, there was a sign of growing consciousness in Labor's ranks of the need for a sharper definition of Britain's role in the world as the nation that offered a Socialist alternative. Fifty-nine members of Parliament signed an amendment to the opening speech by King George VI in which they expressed "the urgent hope that the government will so review and recast its conduct of international affairs as to afford the utmost encouragement to and collaboration with all nations and groups striving to secure full Socialist planning and control of the world's resources."

In this way, they concluded, the government could "provide a democratic and constructive Socialist alternative to an otherwise inevitable conflict between American capitalism and Soviet Communism in which all hope of world government would be destroyed."

### **Noble Intention**

If the verbal intentions of nations had any relationship to realities, then the problem of religious and racial persecution would have been well on the way to solution. For on November 20, 1946 the General Assembly of the United Nations, the highest and most numerous international body the world had ever known, unanimously adopted a resolution that read:

"The General Assembly of the United Nations declares that it is in the higher interests of humanity to put an immediate end to religious and so-called racial persecutions and discriminations, and calls on the Governments and responsible authorities to conform both to the letter and to the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, and to take the most prompt and energetic steps to that end."

### **The Refugees**

IN ALL the world—East and West—the organic base of such civilization as existed was the home and the family. World War II had wrought unimaginable havoc to this foundation of social existence. In the United States, the problem evinced itself simply as one of readjustment to the home and the family. No Americans had been uprooted against their will.

But for Europe and Asia the problem was



the actual physical existence of the family and the home.

The total number of homeless persons immediately after the war was staggering. The soil of Europe and Asia boiled as though dozens of volcanoes had thrown out human lava and created currents and crosscurrents. Refugees, displaced persons, prisoners of war, liberated slave laborers. It was the greatest movement of the uprooted in history.

Early in 1945, the total number of displaced Germans within Germany was estimated at from 21,000,000 to 30,000,000. They were the human stuff with which the Nazis had built their war machine, refugees from bombs and oncoming Allied armies. Some 600,000 of them were racial Germans who had been transferred to Germany from Eastern European countries in pursuit of the Nazi policy of building a racially pure Reich.

Over and above this were the United Nations nationals—more than 8,500,000, most of whom had been driven into Germany as forced laborers. And there were hundreds of thousands of Allied prisoners of war.

The total of Europe's uprooted might have been greater by more than 5,000,000 had not this number of Jews been exterminated by the Nazis. Of the 1,250,000 surviving European Jews, most were without homes and families.

The number of uprooted in the Soviet Union was not known. The displaced Russians in the areas occupied by the Nazis must have run to millions. In addition, there were still 2,000,000 German and 1,000,000 Japanese prisoners of war in the Soviet Union, and no move was in sight for their repatriation. There were also about 1,000,000 Poles who had been deported to Russia by the Soviet political authorities and an unknown number of nationals of other Eastern European nations who had suffered a similar fate.

Within China, the longest suffering and most populous of the Allies, some 20,000,000 Chinese had been forced to flee their homes.

At the end of the war 12,000,000 refugees and displaced persons were in Japan. About 2,000,000 of these were Koreans and most of the rest Japanese displaced by bombing and by forced labor.

The responsibility of the Nazis for making Europe a cauldron of boiling humanity reacted brutally upon the Germans them-

selves. After western Poland was restored and eastern Germany was ceded to Poland, and after the Czechoslovaks regained the Sudetenland, a great forced transfer of German residents in these areas and in Hungary and Yugoslavia got under way. The total involved was estimated at 12,000,000 Germans, most of them nationals of other countries where they had lived for generations. They included known opponents of Nazism.

### Resettlement

Toward the end of 1946 these enormous totals had been substantially reduced, except for prisoners of war and slave laborers. Most of them had found their old homes or had established new ones and were united with what was left of their families.

In Asia the total number of uprooted was now estimated at 2,000,000. They included 14,000 displaced Jews in Shanghai. There were also about 350,000 displaced Indian nationals who had sought refuge in India from war areas.

In Germany, by the close of 1946, most of the Russians, Frenchmen, Poles, and Belgians had been repatriated. There were left in Germany, Austria, and Italy more than 1,000,000 displaced, of whom 800,000 were in displaced-persons camps. Among these was the hard core of non-repatriables who were unable or unwilling to return to their countries of origin for various reasons, mostly political. Among these, too, were persons of undiscoverable nationality, those who had become mentally unbalanced by their suffering, and orphans who would never know whence they came, or who their parents were. Nearly 500,000 were nationals of Poland. About 190,000 were natives of the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, which had been annexed by the Soviet Union. About 47,000 were natives of Yugoslavia.

Many of them were women and children. About 150,000 were below the age of seventeen.

By religion, there were approximately 500,000 Catholics, 200,000 Jews, and 100,000 Protestants.

About 90 per cent of the 800,000 total were in the American and British zones of Germany.

Pockets of displaced persons were scattered all over Europe. In Austria, there were

500,000 refugees of all kinds. They constituted about 10 per cent of the total population and were a crushing burden on the country. Denmark was trying to support 200,000 German refugees. In central Europe the resettling of minorities was creating turmoil.

### **Jewish Displaced**

During 1946, the number of Jewish refugees in Germany rose instead of fell. This was due mainly to continuance of anti-Semitic terror in Poland. By late November, Dr. Joseph S. Schwartz, director of the Joint Distribution Committee's overseas-relief program, placed the total at 250,000 in DP camps in Germany, Austria, and Italy, of whom 155,000 were in the American zone in Germany and 30,000 in the American zone in Austria. Of the 600,000 Jews who lived in Germany in 1933, about 15,000 remained.

By the end of 1946 the physical needs of the Jewish displaced were no longer an urgent problem, except for new arrivals from Poland who required shelter. The food ration for Jewish refugees in the American zone of Germany had a higher caloric content than that granted to any other group in Germany, according to General Joseph T. McNarney, the commanding officer. Military government nutritional teams reported that refugees arriving in Germany were in better health than residents of Germany. The birthrate among Jews in the camps was rapidly rising. These conditions were threatened by the discontinuation of UNRRA and by inadequate appropriations for the American Army in Europe.

Morale was a different problem. The hope of most to go to Palestine persisted. But as time passed without these hopes being realized, the single-minded devotion to it was dwindling. Investigators reported that most of the refugees were now ready to go anywhere, so long as they could get away from the camps. Zionist discouragement of any tendency to resettle the refugees in places other than Palestine was beginning to lose effect. There was strong, continuing resentment among the refugees against the British and the Allies in general for preventing them from going to Palestine. But there was also a growing restiveness against the Zionist officials themselves for raising what seemed, more and more, an illusory hope.

The British continued their policy of permitting only 1,500 visas a month for immigrants into Palestine.

### **Illegal Immigration**

How much of the so-called illegal immigration into Palestine resulted in any Jews actually getting in was unknown. Apparently most of these efforts were detected by the British, and the immigrants were held until they could be granted visas under the 1,500 a month allowance the British were granting. Consequently, the stories of illegal immigration created a false impression; in the end not very many more immigrants reached Palestine in spite of all the dramatic underground efforts. But whatever there was of such immigration was claimed to be the work of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and Hagana.

Nevertheless, such groups as Peter Bergson's National Committee for Hebrew Liberation, in the United States, conducted loud and partially successful fund-raising drives on the grounds that they were saving Jews and getting them into Palestine.

The Communists were also active. Communist policy, which was both anti-British and anti-Zionist, made excellent use of the situation in Palestine and of the plight of the refugees. The American Jewish Labor Council, a Communist front in New York, on October 30 extensively denounced the British in terms similar to but more extreme than those used by the Zionists. But it avoided any denunciation of Zionism except for accusing the British of "a plan to create a ghetto for the Jews and to incite conflict between Jew and Arab" through British espousal of the partition plan, which the British were not—at least at that time—espousing.

Next day this same group announced that a seven-man delegation would go to Europe by air, for a seven-weeks visit to Jewish communities in Europe. The communities did not include Germany. The purpose of the trip was to disburse \$50,000 for the reconstruction of Jewish life in Europe. How much of the \$50,000 would be left after the expenses of seven men on a seven-week tour of Europe had been paid was problematical.

The curious fact was that the policy of the Soviet Union and of Great Britain on Jewish survivors in Europe was virtually

identical. On May 24 a broadcast in Arabic on the Moscow radio said: "Jews living in Europe think before anything else of a normal and human life which could be established in the countries in which they have lived for centuries." On the very same day, in London, the British member of the United Nations Special Committee on Refugees and Displaced Persons said: "His Majesty's government cannot subscribe to the policy that there is no place for Jews in Central Europe. On the contrary, Jews are capable of contributing vital elements to the civilization of Central Europe."

### International Action

International responsibility for refugees had gone through three stages.

The High Commissioner for Refugees, appointed by the League of Nations to provide legal and political protection for Russians, Armenians, and Assyrians displaced during the first World War, had continued a formal but ineffectual existence that was due to end on December 31, 1946.

In 1938, the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees was established at the Evian Conference in France. It had thirty-six nation-members, but its operational funds came principally from the United States and Great Britain. On July 16, 1946 this group decided to keep going and concentrate on emigration and resettlement of non-repatriable refugees.

Most of the intergovernmental responsibility for the millions uprooted by the Second World War had been handled by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, with the considerable aid of the Allied armies. About \$4,000,000,000 was spent by UNRRA, of which 72 per cent was contributed by the United States. UNRRA's general operations were scheduled to cease at the end of 1946, but its work with refugees was to continue until not later than June 30, 1947.

### The UN Takes Over

The responsibility for carrying on UNRRA's work and for establishing a single international body to handle all aspects of the refugee problem was accepted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on February 12, 1946. In early December, the constitution of the proposed International

Refugee Organization was still being debated.

On February 16, the Economic and Social Council of the UN established a twenty-nation Special Committee on Refugees and Displaced Persons to look into the whole matter and report back. The Committee met in London for eight weeks.

At these meetings, the only serious obstacle in the way of a completed constitution was thoroughly discussed. The problem was whether political refugees should be included in the scope of the projected organization's activities. The Soviet bloc fought bitterly to exclude refugees from Russia and Eastern Europe who opposed the current regimes and refused to return to face death or forced labor. All other nations consistently opposed the Soviet view that refugees who opposed the governments in power in the nations of their origin were necessarily "quislings and traitors." The Soviet amendments were consistently defeated.

The Special Committee reported to the Economic and Social Council in New York on June 13. The Soviet bloc pressed their fight unsuccessfully. At the fall meeting of the Economic and Social Council, the Soviet bloc continued to fight. It threatened not to contribute financially to an organization servicing political refugees. Again it proposed numerous amendments. Again the Soviet bloc was defeated.

On October 3, the Economic and Social Council, with the Soviet Union, the Ukraine, and Yugoslavia objecting, approved a draft constitution for the IRO and referred it to the General Assembly. The draft defined refugees as "victims of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, or political opinions, previous to the outbreak of the Second World War, and those displaced persons who as a result of events subsequent to the Second World War are unable or unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of the government of their country."

### Major Onslaught

With the convening of the General Assembly in New York in October, the Soviet bloc once more reopened all the controversies which had been fought over and settled in various UN bodies. This time the onslaught came from on high. Andrei Y. Vishinsky, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs

of the Soviet Union, opened the attack before the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee of the General Assembly on November 6. He declared that free speech and free press in the refugee camps was a threat to world peace, that the propaganda against repatriation undermined the "natural" patriotism of the refugees and destroyed their human rights, that refugees who were resettled outside of Europe would be doomed to a wandering existence "in alien living conditions," that no aid should be given such refugees, that persons who had collaborated with the Axis (presumably after the Nazi invasion of Russia) should be denied assistance even if they had done so for humanitarian and non-military purposes, that "Hitlerite" military groups such as the Chetniks and General Anders' Polish Army should be disbanded and their members hanged.

Two days later, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt replied. "The assumption that all people who do not wish to return to the country of their origin [are unwilling to return] because those countries are now under what is called a democratic form of government does not seem to allow for certain differences in the understanding of the word democracy," Mrs. Roosevelt said. "As Mr. Vishinsky uses it, it would seem that democracy is synonymous with Soviet."

Sixty-five amendments to the draft constitution of IRO were presented, most of them by the Soviet bloc. By the end of November most of these had been rejected by the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee or had resulted in compromises. Many of these amendments, though not directed against Jews as Jews, would have jeopardized the position of Jewish refugees. The Polish delegation, in advocating the repatriation of war orphans, declared that it would not insist on the repatriation of Jewish war orphans of Polish nationality. The Committee adopted a compromise amendment providing for "all possible priority assistance" in the repatriation of war orphans up to sixteen years of age.

The position of the Jewish refugee was finally threatened in an amendment adopted on November 25 by a vote of twenty-one to five, with the United States and the United Kingdom joining the Slav and Arab bloc in approval. The amendment read:

"The International Refugee Organization

should endeavor to carry out its functions in such way as to avoid disturbing the friendly relations between nations. In pursuit of this objective, the organization should exercise special care in cases where the planning of reestablishment or resettlement of refugees or displaced persons in countries contiguous to their respective countries of origin, or any non-self-governing countries, is contemplated. The organization should give due weight, among other factors, to any evidence of genuine apprehension and concern felt in regard to such plans, in the former case, by the countries of origin of the persons involved, or in the latter case by the indigenous population of the non-self-governing countries in question."

Under this amendment the IRO would have to consult with the Soviet Union before it undertook to settle displaced Lithuanians in western Germany. It also meant that if the IRO sought to establish Jewish refugees in Palestine, it would have to take into consideration any protest that might be lodged by Palestinian Arabs. While not bound to act upon these protests and opinions, the IRO would not be able to ignore them.

In early December, the fate of this amendment as well as of the entire draft constitution for the IRO was still to be determined by the General Assembly.

### Resettlement Possibilities

While the UN hotly debated theoretical resettlement of refugees, the concrete opportunities for their resettlement outside of Europe were dim. The replies to official inquiries by the UN revealed that, without definite changes in government policies, there was little welcome anywhere in the world for non-repatriable refugees.

Australia, with a population of 7,000,000 in an area equal to the United States, had set a quota of 70,000 immigrants a year in the next three years. However, Australia made it plain that it would be at least two years before non-British immigration could start.

Canada offered to take 4,000 Polish army veterans and to admit relatives of residents and of the 3,500 refugees to whom it gave asylum during the war. But strong opposition was developing against any further action.

The United Kingdom promised only to



reunite families by admitting to England certain relatives of persons already resident there.

In Latin America, some nations made vague promises, but little immigration was under way.

Meantime, most of the non-Slavic nations were subscribing to an agreement to honor international travel documents for stateless refugees similar to the Nansen passports issued by the League of Nations after the last war. But travel documents were of little value to refugees with no place to go.

### U. S. Action

The rest of the world may have been waiting for the United States to act, and in the United States the situation was difficult. The United States allowed a total annual immigration of 153,879 for the whole world outside of the Western hemisphere, from which immigration was unrestricted. However, 82 per cent of this quota was assigned to Great Britain, Scandinavia, and other Western European countries which are not countries of emigration. The quotas for Central European countries, from which most of the displaced persons come, were 39,000 a year. And of this, 27,000 were the German and Austrian quota, under which few displaced persons could qualify. Actually, then, a maximum of 12,000 visas was theoretically available for the countries from which the great bulk of displaced persons came.

But there were additional difficulties. Quotas were not cumulative. At the end of each year, those not filled simply expired. Furthermore, not more than 10 per cent of the annual quota for each country could be used in any one month, and the unused portion of any monthly quota could not be carried over to the next month.

In actual practice, for the period from 1932 through 1945, only 19 per cent of about 2,000,000 available visas, or 375,000, were granted to immigrants. During the war years, quota fulfillment ranged from 6 to 10 per cent. The average net immigration from Europe between 1933 and 1944 was only about 25,000. All quotas were, of course, available to non-Jews as well as Jews.

In the light of this situation, one year after President Harry Truman had issued his directive in December 1945 expediting immigration, only about 5,000 immigrants

had arrived in the United States from Central and Eastern Europe.

### A Campaign Starts

Until late in 1946, two years after the end of the war, little effort was made in the United States to lift immigration restrictions or even provide for the use of unused quotas. Zionist organizations had maintained a dead silence in the matter. Even non-Zionist Jewish organizations did not pursue the issue with any vigor. Non-Jewish organizations, faced with the outcry of the Zionists for immigration exclusively into Palestine, hesitated to act for fear of being denounced as anti-Semites and for fear of actual sabotage by the Zionists of any movement they might start.

However, by the fall of 1946 a change of heart was evident. A movement was under way to make unused wartime immigration quotas available to all displaced persons. The non-Zionist American Jewish Committee, the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism, and the Jewish Labor Committee were in the vanguard of this move. They were followed by pro-Zionist Jewish organizations such as the American Jewish Conference, the Jewish War Veterans of the United States, and the Agudas Israel Youth Council. Among Zionist leaders, Dr. Stephen S. Wise was the only one to support this move publicly. Non-Jewish organizations also joined. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, the central body of Protestantism, had been in the field early. The National Catholic Welfare Conference now approved. The Congress of Industrial Organizations approved. Even the American Federation of Labor, long an enemy of increased immigration, passed a resolution at its annual convention advocating the use of unused wartime immigration quotas. Thus far opposition had come only from the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution.

In the field of non-governmental aid to Europe's displaced Jews, American Jews had revealed their deep concern. The United Jewish Appeal, which had undertaken the seemingly impossible task of raising \$100,000,000 during 1946, announced in November that it had actually raised \$102,000,000. During the same year, disbursements of the three organizations participating in the UJA

amounted to \$113,000,000. Of this the Joint Distribution Committee spent \$58,000,000 for its relief and rehabilitation efforts overseas. The agencies supported by the United Palestine Appeal spent \$52,000,000 for immigration, settlement, and upbuilding of the Jewish national home. The United Service for New Americans spent nearly \$3,000,000 for the adjustment of refugees in the United States.

For 1947, the United Jewish Appeal announced a goal of \$170,000,000.

In November, too, the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees turned over \$22,000,500 to Jewish organizations as compensation for damage suffered by Jewish communities during the Nazi regime. The money was supplied by the Allied Reparations Commission. The Joint Distribution Committee was to receive 60 per cent of the amount, with the Jewish Agency for Palestine getting 40 per cent.

### History Reverses Itself

The irrationality of an irrational world reached its height in Budapest. On October 28, according to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, two Jewish physicians were fined 1,000 florins each by a Hungarian court for failure to register the American dollars they received in payment for two operations. The operations were performed on Nazis who desired to change their appearance so that they would look like Jews.

### Palestine

THE atmosphere in Palestine continued in a state of high tension. The Yishuv was bitter against the British. The bitterness was reciprocated by soldiers and policemen in Palestine, who had suffered nearly 100 deaths from extremist attacks during 1946. Hagana began to show growing hostility to the Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Sternists. The release of the Jewish Agency leaders was balanced by the continued rerouting of immigrants to Cyprus.

In London, the liberal and highly respected *Manchester Guardian* took a long hard look at this situation. In a leading editorial on November 21, it spoke frankly:

"Despite the release of Jewish leaders and the half-hearted attempts of Hagana, the terrorists are becoming bolder, holding up

trains and murdering British troops and police who live in constant fear of death.

"Inevitably soldiers are infected by bitterness and hatred. Terrorism leads to reprisals and because the guilty are not known the innocent suffer. British troops cannot be blamed if they get out of control sometimes, though the same tolerance cannot be extended to officers. Certainly Jewish terrorists themselves are to blame if anti-Semitism spreads as it is doing not only in Palestine but in this country. The terrorists welcome anti-Semitism in England and elsewhere to justify their thesis that Jews are unsafe, and free only in their own country. They are ruthless men corrupt by the sickness of the time, caring nothing for the sufferings of the individual Jews in Europe. For them every pogrom in Poland is another argument for Zionism, while even a school boy's jest or a loutish sneer remind some Jew in England that the eternal problem of his race is unsolved. If they can provoke the British into brutality they are satisfied and say the British are no better than the rest. These men are dangerous and must be stopped no matter what fearful experience has driven them and no matter what sympathy they deserve; they are becoming a menace to the Jewish National Home and to the whole Jewish race.

"But whether we can suppress them by the present policy is another question. Every time a Jewish settlement is raided or a Tel Aviv quarter rounded up, it is likely to help them. Every time an immigrant ship is seized in Haifa, recruits are won for them since deportations cannot be done humanely."

The *Guardian* quoted a French journalist who sailed to Palestine in a refugee ship and described how the ship was stopped by a destroyer off Haifa and was boarded by sailors, armed with batons, shouting "bloody Jews," and using tear gas.

"Of course," the *Guardian* wrote, "what else can the Navy do if a ship won't stop? The crew cannot be blamed but something is wrong with the policy which makes British soldiers and sailors do these things, risking their lives in a hateful cowardly struggle. In the long run only the Jews themselves can suppress the terrorists and will have to do it."

SIDNEY HERTZBERG

## THE GIFT OF THE EMPEROR

A Story

LEO KATZ

MORDCHE, who was *shames* at the middle synagogue and taught Hebrew to women and young girls on the side, would never have dreamt of entering into direct correspondence with the Emperor. He often thought of the Emperor, Franz Joseph, though; and a picture of the Emperor hung in his room, as it did in most houses in Sereth.

Even on this very Sunday afternoon, in the main street of Mihaleni—which was a Rumanian border town and therefore outside the territory of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy—Mordche was thinking about the Emperor and his multifarious businesses. On Sunday afternoons in summer, and often in winter too, many of the inhabitants of Sereth would drive the four miles out to the small Rumanian frontier town. There they would drink wine and eat meat grilled over charcoal. The taverns of Mihaleni were always full, and there were a great many taverns in Mihaleni.

Mordche, as has been said, had two jobs, but he did not earn enough to be able to walk into a tavern, as he longed to, and stand up at the bar and say to the proprietor or proprietress, "Let's see what your vinegar

tastes like." It would annoy them to hear their wine called vinegar, but they had to be polite to a paying customer, and in spite of their irritation they'd smile and serve him his glass of wine. But when you have no money, you aren't entitled to say anything.

Why had he come to Mihaleni then? Well, his neighbor, Dudl Schmotscheck, had pointed to the empty seat on his wagon-box and called out, "Come on, Mordche, sit next to me. It won't hurt you to ride over with us."

Often an acquaintance would notice him in the street in Mihaleni and offer him a glass of wine. But today he had already been walking up and down the long street for hours. The voices coming out of the drinking places sounded as though everybody had their tongues well soaked, but nobody seemed to remember Mordche. Wandering about in the streets on a hot day, all alone, with nothing to quench your thirst, and seeing others enjoying themselves in plenty, produces dismal thoughts.

I can't understand the Emperor, thought Mordche. At home, in Sereth, under his government, meat and wine are three times as expensive as in Mihaleni. But you are not allowed to bring anything in from Mihaleni. On the other hand, if you go there yourself you can eat and drink as much as you want to. Wouldn't it be better then for the Emperor if the meat and wine were brought home before they were eaten and drunk, so that the tavern-keepers of Sereth would make the profit instead of those in Mihaleni? The Emperor's attention ought to be called to this. But after all, was that Mordche's worry? The Emperor had been sitting on the throne

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for sixty years now, carrying on his businesses with the army and tobacco and cigarettes, with law courts and taxes. He had never told Mordche how many candles to light in the synagogue; so why should Mordche give him advice about allowing Rumanian wine and meat into Sereth?

**J**ust then a stranger came up to Mordche and said, "Reb Mordche, will you drink a glass of wine with me?"

This did not surprise Mordche. As *shames* of a synagogue, he was used to seeing strange faces and being spoken to by strangers. Someone traveling through might want to honor his late father's or mother's memorial day. He would ask Mordche to provide the candles and buy some brandy so that they could drink to the health of the deceased's soul after *kaddish*. Mordche never asked these people's family names or places of origin, but only their mothers' names and those of the deceased. That was the regulation.

So when this stranger asked Mordche to have a drink of wine, he did not say no. They went into a tavern and the stranger ordered two glasses of wine. These were hardly emptied before he had them filled up a second, a third, and even a fourth time. The stranger also invited Mordche to help himself to his heart's desire from the meat dishes at the bar. Mordche wondered, however, whether the stranger would also let him have a few pennies to buy some candy to take home for the children. They sold a Turkish honey called *rahat* at Mihaleni, and *halvah*, a stuff made of nuts and sugar.

Then he heard the stranger saying: "Would you be kind enough to keep this package for me until I come back? I have to go somewhere on some urgent business."

He handed Mordche a package and a crown piece, and added, "In case I'm late, which is not likely, don't worry but just take the package home with you and I'll call for it there."

"But you don't know me at all," said Mordche.

"Who doesn't know Mordche *shames*?"

Mordche felt very much flattered by these words. He took the package, and went off to the delicatessen to buy a few pennies worth of candy for his children. He had not had such a lucky day in a long while. The delicatessen man, who knew him, was not a little amazed by Mordche's extravagance when he saw him buy thirty cents' worth of *halvah* and *rahat*. This was the maximum amount you were allowed to take across the border without paying duty.

As he still had seventy cents left from the crown, Mordche was even tempted to go to another tavern in order to say, "Let me have a look at your vinegar." But he gave up the idea. If God had sent him such a wonderful day, he should not be too reckless about it and attract public attention. In his happiness, Mordche had forgotten only one thing—which was that he was on the wrong side of the border and therefore he had to be careful about packages.

**I**t was getting late now. Several people with buggies offered him a ride but Mordche refused them all and continued to wait for the stranger. Dusk set in. It came time for the evening prayer. Mordche said the prayer behind the tavern, but the stranger still did not appear. The last wagon had left Mihaleni for Sereth. Alone, with the package under his arm, Mordche went toward the customs station. After all, he thought, there was no harm in walking a few miles on a summer evening; it even did you good after eating so much meat and drinking so much wine.

Nothing ever escaped those faithful servants of His Imperial Majesty, the border guards. How often had Mordche crossed the border on foot or sitting on the box of some buggy without being asked whether he had anything dutiable or prohibited with him.

The chief inspector, in a green uniform, noticed the package under Mordche's arm and asked him, "Have you anything to declare?" Mordche showed him the bit of candy he was taking home to his children. He had quite forgotten about the



package—he was carrying for the stranger. “And you haven’t anything else to declare?”

“What should some one like me have to declare?”

The chief inspector ordered Mordche to follow him into the customs house. Inside, his voice changed:

“Give me that package.”

Only now did Mordche remember that he had another package. He started to explain, telling about the wonderful day God had sent him, about the stranger he had met who had bought him meat and wine and given him a whole crown into the bargain; in short, he wanted to talk about all the good things that had happened to him on this summer afternoon. But the inspector ordered him to be silent.

He opened the package. It was wrapped in several layers of paper. In the end it turned out that it contained Russian snuff. Now Mordche did not know much about the Emperor’s business, but he did know that the Emperor dealt in snuff among other things. No snuff other than that made in, and shipped from, the factories of His Majesty, Emperor Franz Joseph I, was allowed to be sold in the stores in Sereth—and the same was said to be the case in all other cities and villages of his realm. Like all Jews in Sereth, Mordche was a good patriot. But like all Jews, he had to admit that the snuff produced by the Russian Czar was incomparably superior to that of the Emperor Franz Joseph. This was why everybody preferred Russian snuff to Austrian. And its price was twenty times as high. Mordche also knew that the smuggling of Russian snuff was strictly forbidden and severely punished.

So when Mordche saw this amount of snuff in his package—or rather in the package that the stranger had asked him to hold—he was seized by such fear as he had only experienced once before in his life, when his phylacteries had accidentally slipped from his hands and fallen to the floor. He had had to fast for forty days to expiate that sin. But fasting saved money. Would

the customs officers settle for a penalty of fasting? He wanted to propose this to them immediately, because he was afraid that the fine would be so large that he would have nothing left of the change from his crown.

THE chief inspector did not grant Mordche so much as a look. He pressed a button. Another inspector appeared who was asked to call in the head of the customs station, Chief Commissioner Womula. Soon the room was filled with all the other officials. The tobacco was weighed and it turned out to amount to five pounds, four and six-sevenths ounces.

The Chief Commissioner said, “Man, do you realize what you’ve done? Do you know what the penalty for this is?”

“I didn’t know anything about it,” said Mordche. “A stranger gave me the package to hold for him. I don’t know whether I have the right to leave it with you. I should talk it over with our rabbi first.”

“Is your rabbi mixed up in this, too?”

“God forbid! Only, because the stranger gave me a crown, I have to ask the rabbi whether that made me a hired watchman, and therefore duty-bound to hold on to, and watch the package until the stranger asks for it back, or whether the crown could be considered a present, in which case I would be an unpaid watchman and have no obligation.”

Mordche pulled at his beard and went on, “You see, gentlemen, the case can be looked at this way and that. It all depends on the interpretation. Now, in the tract *Babamizia*, for instance—”

The Chief Commissioner interrupted him, “My dear sir, you are now in the Royal Imperial Customs House. There is no question of interpretation around here. You don’t seem to be aware of what you’ve done.”

Chief Commissioner Womula was a decent man. He believed Mordche’s story. But what could he do? Snuff was a Royal Imperial monopoly and could not be imported into the territory of the Monarchy. Smuggling one pound of snuff was pun

ished at the rate of a fine of a hundred-and-twenty-thousand crowns or a year in prison. He wanted to help the poor man, but it was impossible to suspend the proceedings, because Mordche had been asked twice by the inspector, in accordance with the regulations, whether he had anything to declare, and had twice answered no. The Commissioner by no means wanted to send him to prison for years, but he did have to take some official action. He knew that he would never lay eyes on the stranger who had given the package to Mordche. Smugglers were up to all kinds of tricks and always involved simple people in them.

At last he said to Mordche, "What you are going to talk over with your rabbi is your own business. As far as I'm concerned, I have to do my duty and fine you a large sum of money."

"Do I have to give you all the money I have?" Mordche asked in fright. "I've got seventy cents and I won't get another penny before Tuesday. My wife can't borrow anything anywhere because nobody'll lend her anything. Suppose I give you fifty cents and you let me keep the other twenty, because I'd like to give them to my wife."

The officers all laughed. "You can keep your seventy cents," said the Commissioner. He did some figuring. Then he said, "Your fine adds up to two-hundred-and-eighty-six-thousand-three-hundred-and-twenty crowns. This sum is to be remitted to the tax collector at Sereth as quickly as possible."

Mordche heaved a sigh of relief. Fifty cents would have hit him hard, and the blow would have been even harder had they asked him for six crowns. That was his average weekly earnings, and he had to feed his wife, his six children, and himself on it. But two-hundred-and-eighty-six-thousand-three-hundred-and-twenty crowns—he could not conceive of such a sum; he could not even imagine that the Emperor himself with all his various businesses had that much money.

So he asked, "Will you give me a certificate that I can show to the stranger when he comes which will show him that—God

forbid—I didn't take his package. And may I also ask you if I can't have a little bit of this snuff for my box? If I could only have such fine Russian snuff in my box when I offer it to the gentlemen at the synagogue on Saturday. . . ."

The Chief Commissioner suppressed a smile and said, "I must draw your attention once more to the fact that the fine is to be remitted as soon as possible, and that until then all your assets, movable and immovable, as well as your income, are placed under official supervision and cannot be disposed of. It is therefore to your own interest to pay the sum to the tax collector at the earliest possible. . . ." Unobserved by the other officers, the Commissioner shook a little snuff into Mordche's box.

Happy and satisfied as he had not been for a long time, Mordche took the road home from Mihaleni to Sereth. He felt like Forefather Jacob after God had appeared to him in a dream on his journey to Haran. No, he thought, I have no obligation towards the stranger. The crown was a present, not payment for holding the package.

NEXT day, Mordche told everybody at the synagogue and in the street about the luck that had come his way, adding that he'd been fined a sum he could not even remember. Some of his listeners did not take the matter as lightly as Mordche. To have anything to do with a government was always a bad business, especially when it came to customs matters, about which the Emperor was very strict. Others thought that they knew the stranger. He was from Czernowitz, they said, and one of the smugglers of Russian snuff. But Mordche had already lost all interest in the matter. When a few days later the mailman brought him an official envelope, Mordche showed it around everywhere proudly. The Emperor was asking him for two-hundred-and-eighty-six-thousand-three-hundred-and-twenty crowns, and at the earliest possible, too. And there was a lot in it about movable and immovable assets, remittances,

income, inheritance, liquidation and confiscation. Mordche didn't understand a word of it, and didn't try to either.

Every month a man in a green uniform would appear at Mordche the *shames'* house, with a paper form in his hand, and ask, "Are you ready to acquit yourself completely of the sum you owe the Imperial Treasury, or at least a substantial fraction thereof? If not, you will have to pay a bailiff's fee of one crown and six cents at once."

Mordche would answer that he was not in the position to pay the bailiff's fee of one crown and six cents, whereupon the man in the green uniform would ask him to sign a statement to the effect that he was unwilling to pay either the total sum, an installment on it, or even the bailiff's fee of one crown and six cents. Mordche always said on this occasion, "I want to, but I can't."

SO THE summer passed, then came the fall and made way for winter, and spring was setting in already, when the man in the green uniform appeared at Mordche's house for what was probably the eighth time. But this time things did not proceed with such formality. He informed Mordche that six dollars had arrived for him from America. Mordche was surprised at first. For more than ten years now his sister in New York had sent him six dollars each year at about this time. But it had always been Justfan, the mailman, who brought him the six dollars—or rather the six dollars already changed into Austrian money. The mailman would count out thirty crowns on the table and Mordche would always give him the five-cent delivery fee and then another five cents for a tip. Then, invariably, a discussion would follow on the blessings of the mails, which took six dollars in New York and paid out thirty silver crowns in Sereth.

Did he also owe him a five-cent delivery fee, Mordche asked the man in the green uniform? And he was ready to part with another five cents for a tip, in return for

which he expected to be paid his sister's six dollars, changed into thirty crowns.

The man in the green uniform answered: "As your entire movable and immovable assets, as well as your income, principal and auxiliary, are under government sequestration, the government has confiscated these thirty crowns as the first installment on the sum you owe the Imperial Treasury. As your debt amounted to two-hundred-and-eighty-six-thousand-three-hundred-and-twenty crowns plus eight crowns and forty-eight cents accumulated bailiff's fees, your total debt now amounts to two-hundred-and-eighty-six-thousand-three-hundred-and-twenty-eight crowns and forty-eight cents. From this total, thirty crowns are deducted, which reduces your debt to the government to two-hundred-and-eighty-six-thousand-two-hundred-and-ninety-eight crowns and forty-eight cents.

"You see, Mr. Lew," he added, "your debt is shrinking very slowly. Have you got only one sister in America? Now if you had several and they sent you presents more often, you'd make quicker progress."

With these words, the man in the green uniform left Mordche the *shames'* dwelling.

Mourning reigned in Mordche's house. "It is said that joy comes with the arrival of the month of Adar," Mordche said to his wife, "but sorrow has come to us. What shall we do?"

The question was a difficult one. The thirty crowns Mordche received every year from his sister for Passover formed a substantial part of his income. They paid for the repairing and mending of the old shoes and clothes given to Mordche for his family during the year. As Mordche had realized long ago, people only gave away what they could no longer use themselves. He did not mind his children wearing grown-ups' shoes, if only they hadn't been so full of holes. Fortunately, Berl the shoemaker was a friend of his and would fix the shoes for a small sum. It was for this and the mending of the old clothes that the New York sister's thirty crowns were destined. And now all of a sudden the Em-

peror had taken the thirty crowns away. Despair was great in Mordche's house. But Mordche was a pious Jew who never lost his trust in God.

"I'm sure the Emperor would never have done this," he said to his wife, "if he knew our situation. They call him the Merciful Emperor. The question is how to tell him about this."

Mordche went from one lawyer to another. They all listened and they all gave him the same answer—there was nothing to be done in this kind of matter, and Mordche should consider himself lucky that the Treasury had shown him such leniency and had not thrown him into jail.

In the synagogue Mordche said to everybody, but especially to himself: "It's impossible, it just can't be that such a rich man as the Emperor, with so many businesses and on top of them all a printing press where he can make all the banknotes and coins he wants—for who can stop him?—it can't be that a man like that should take away six dollars from me, a poor *shames*, whose sister worked so hard for them." But the people who listened to Mordche offered him neither sympathy nor advice; instead, they warned him not to make seditious speeches.

ON HIS return from the synagogue, he found Deaf Abraham, the corner scribe, waiting for him at home. Abraham was called the Deaf because his father had been deaf. Abraham's own hearing was normal. Deaf Abraham was considered Mordche's enemy because six years ago both he and Mordche had simultaneously applied for the post of *shames* at the synagogue, and Mordche had got the job. But now when Mordche was in need, it turned out that Abraham had secretly remained his friend.

"Mordche," said Abraham, "I heard of your great misfortune. I know it is as deep as the sea, but a pious Jew must never despair. We will both sit down and write a letter to the Emperor. Now show me all your papers."

Mordche found the letter that Justfan, the mailman, had delivered to him shortly after that fatal Sunday. Deaf Abraham read the document carefully, then shook his head. He understood its contents, and especially the terms, "movable and immovable assets," just as little as Mordche had.

"Listen, Mordche," he said, "go across to Nute Bender at the stationer's and buy a sheet of letter paper, a white envelope and a three-cent stamp."

Meanwhile Mordche's wife, Gittel, made potato soup, and Abraham was asked to stay to dinner. Mordche brought the paper. And after dinner Deaf Abraham examined his quills, chose the best one, and began to compose the following letter to the Emperor:

"Dear Gracious Emperor: You do not know me. But your picture has been hanging on my wall for a hundred and twenty years next to the pictures of our Jewish benefactors, Baron Hirsch and Montefiore. My name is Mordche Lew, or more exactly, Mordche *shames*. A *shames* has a sacred calling. But may God keep all Jews and all decent human beings from being *shameses*. There is no salary, and when there aren't enough candles it's my fault. If there's no money for wood in the synagogue, whose fault is it? Mordche *shames*! If one of the worshippers hasn't made enough money, he'll give me only six cents instead of ten cents a week, sometimes only five—and if he hasn't made anything at all that week, I haven't the heart to remind him. I am happy and satisfied when I make as much as six crowns a week as *shames* and as helper to the teacher Jankel.

"As *shames* it's my duty, to which I am accustomed, to obey everyone, to carry out any commission. Mordche, they say, take these fish home for me. Mordche, go get me my coat; it's going to rain. Mordche, take this note over to the wealthy Reb Shlomo. So the stranger at Mihaleni told me to keep his package until he would come for it. How was I to know what was in the package? A *shames* has to do what he is told and not ask questions.



"Mr. Emperor, you can ask anyone you please whether I ever dealt in snuff in all my life. In fact, I never dealt in anything. The stranger seemed a decent man and gave me a whole crown for a present. If I had known there was snuff in the package, I would have said: Gentlemen of the frontier, this package contains snuff but it does not belong to me. As soon as the stranger calls for it I will send him to you. But since I didn't know, I didn't say anything. So they fined me two-hundred-and-eighty-six-thousand-three-hundred-and-twenty crowns. If the employees of Your Majesty thought this was right, it must probably be so. And I accepted the responsibility. And I signed every month what I was asked to sign. But suddenly I was struck as though I had been hit over the head with a club. The thirty crowns that I wait and hope for all year long, the way I do for the Messiah, were taken away from me. It cannot be possible that you, my gracious Mr. Emperor, need my thirty crowns. And now I don't know how I'll get my poor children's shoes fixed. Don't think that the thirty crowns would make me a rich man. I have such worries that I wouldn't wish even half of them on my enemies. I beg you obediently to write to Sereth that they should return my thirty crowns and if possible that they should also not bother me about that matter of the snuff.

"Your deeply sorrowing Mordche Lew, *shames*, and his deeply sorrowing family."

Mordche signed the letter. It was put into the envelope and addressed: "The Emperor Franz Joseph I in Vienna," and underneath Deaf Abraham added, "Very Urgent."

Berl the shoemaker was let in on the secret of the letter. Deaf Abraham guaranteed that this letter, which would have moved a stone, would not fail to have its effect on the Emperor. If the Emperor did not return the whole thirty crowns, Abraham said, he would at least send back fifteen. In view of the prospect offered by this letter, Berl the shoemaker agreed, in

spite of all the difficulties that it might cause for him, to fix Mordche's shoes on credit until the money came from the Emperor.

**W**EEKS of waiting passed. It was after Passover, and Whitsun was approaching. The newspaper reported various things from Vienna. The whole country, they said, was preparing to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of His Majesty, Emperor Franz Joseph I's ascent to the throne. Beaming with joy, Deaf Abraham brought this news to Mordche *shames'* home.

"If the Emperor is going to celebrate his sixtieth jubilee," he said, "he won't bother much about thirty crowns. I think our prospects are favorable."

Then there came more news: the Emperor had added two new provinces to the Monarchy, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Deaf Abraham rushed again to Mordche and said: "Now I think there can't be any doubt left that the Emperor will pay back your thirty crowns. If he's acquired two new provinces, he must be richer than ever."

This time Mordche was sceptical. "It is my experience," he said, "that the richer people get, the less they understand the poor."

Deaf Abraham already looked upon the affair as his own. "With you it's a question of thirty crowns," he would say to Mordche, "and I can understand that the thirty crowns hurt you because you haven't got them and you can't pay what you owe shoemaker Berl; but with me it's a question of justice. When I write a letter I want it to have effect."

Deaf Abraham was not only a scribe; he was also the proprietor of the refreshment counter at the Sereth railroad station. His refreshment counter consisted of a hand-basket containing a bottle of brandy and a few pieces of pastry. Four times a day he went to the station, twice before the arrival and twice before the departure of the trains. This gave him a chance to talk to many people, and now he turned all his conversation to the subject of the Emperor. Abra-

ham inquired about everything: how much the Emperor's fortune was estimated to be, his profit from the sales of cigarettes and tobacco, his income from taxes, his expenses for the army and police, and for his personal needs. Did the Emperor eat a great deal, Abraham wanted to know, did he drink, and above all did he play cards? For Deaf Abraham had a fundamental theory—that human nature sets a limit upon eating and drinking; a rich man may eat and drink as much as he likes without risking his income or property; danger begins only when he falls victim to the passion for card-playing. Then he could lose his entire fortune down to his last under-pants in one night. Abraham felt greatly reassured when he was told that the Emperor was no card-player.

ONE day he turned up at Mordche *shames* in a particularly cheerful mood. "Mordche," said he, "I have good news for you."

"Did an answer come from Vienna?"

"Not yet, but from what I've heard I no longer have much doubt that the Emperor will give back your thirty crowns."

"King Solomon, who was the wisest man in the world," answered Mordche *shames*, "said that a dead dog in my possession is better than a live lion in the bush."

"I don't see what the one has to do with the other. I'm talking to you about India and you answer me about Ethiopia. What have King Solomon's dead dog and live lion to do with our Emperor?"

"Too much. I'd rather have twenty crowns in my hand, or even fifteen, than the hope of getting all thirty."

"Mordche, why do you make a habit of not letting a person finish what he has to say? Listen to me. Yesterday at the station I met a traveling salesman from Vienna. He bought a glass of brandy from me and we got to talking. 'You're from Vienna,' I said, 'do you ever see the Emperor?' 'Almost every day,' he answered me. 'He goes for a drive in the streets in a beautiful carriage.' 'By himself, or with his wife and

children?' I asked him. 'Our Emperor,' he answered, 'is the most unhappy man in the world. He is a widower and he has no children.'"

"No children?" cried Morche in fright. "Whom is he going to leave his whole fortune to then?"

"That's just what I want to talk to you about. He's got a large country, and now he's added two new provinces to it, and he isn't a card-player. So what does he need your thirty crowns for? Do you understand now why my hopes and yours are justified?"

Mordche thought for a few moments. "An Emperor is not just anybody," he said. "He can't just go and die and leave a large country with a great network of businesses. He'll certainly pick out somebody to be his heir."

"Quite right. He's done that too, the salesman from Vienna told me. He's made some distant relative his heir. But you know, you feel differently toward your own flesh and blood than you do toward some distant tramp of a relative. Don't you know the story about the very rich man who had no children? One day his wife died. So he adopted a son and treated him like his own child and gave him the best education. Then one day—changeable as are the fortunes of man—a great misfortune befell the rich man. He was sentenced to death by hanging. They led him to the gallows. The whole town collected there weeping over his fate. His adopted son stood next to him. The judges were there, but no hangman could be found. The judges issued a proclamation: a thousand crowns to anyone willing to serve as hangman. Nobody came forward. Then the adopted son offered himself: 'Father,' said he, 'you will have to be hanged in any case. So why should a stranger and not I earn the money?' You see, Mordche, that's what an adopted son is. Now why, I ask you, would the Emperor be interested in leaving your thirty crowns to his adopted son—or the Heir to the Crown, as they call him—in addition to a whole country with two new provinces and so many prosperous

businesses? That's why I'm certain that he'll answer our letter favorably."

LIKE many other cities in the realm of His Majesty, Emperor Franz Joseph I, the city of Sereth prepared for the jubilee celebration of the Emperor's coronation. There was talk about an expected amnesty. It was rumored that the Emperor had decided, in connection with the jubilee, to cheapen the price of cigarettes, lower the tariff on flour and wine, and cut the tax on brandy. One Friday around noon, as Mordche was just about to go to the steam-bath, there appeared at his house a young man named Lewitzki who was orderly to the Provost Marshal of the district. Lewitzki was an impudent young fellow and sported the largest curled moustache in all Sereth. He considered his job more important than that of the Provost Marshal himself. Provost Marshals, he used to say, come and go; they depend on the whims of the Provincial Governor; but their orderly is securely ensconced in his office. And therefore Lewitzki addressed everybody in a familiar manner. He usually entered without knocking and his tone of voice was one of official command.

Thus Mordche was much surprised when Lewitzki greeted him with a civil good morning, gave him, Mordche the *shames*, his hand and said in the politest tone: "Mr. Mordche Lew, the Provost Marshal begs that you come to his office. He says he has an important communication for you from the Chancellor of His Majesty, our august Monarch, Franz Joseph. A joyful communication, the Provost Marshal asked me to inform you. It has something to do, he says, with the amnesty and with the magnanimity that the Emperor is now bestowing, and has for sixty years bestowed, upon everyone. So please come soon, and if it turns out to be something extra good, remember Gregory Lewitzki who has always been your friend."

Mordche was dazed with surprise. His children helped him to shine his shoes, while his wife got his Sabbath trousers and

his Sabbath cloak out of the chest. He curled his ear-locks and put on the velvet hat his father-in-law had given him twenty years ago as a wedding present. Accompanied by the blessings of his family, he set out for the Provost Marshal's.

But first of all, he wished to tell his friend, benefactor, and helper, Deaf Abraham. At this time on Friday Abraham was always at the bath-house where Mordche himself would have been had the Provost Marshal not summoned him. Mordche therefore made a detour across Volksgarten Street and Einbrunnen Alley and headed straight for Herman's bath-house.

He knew the rules of the place well enough to know that no one in clothes was ever allowed inside—but who with a heart so full could be expected to care about rules and customs? He rushed past the bath manager, Herman, and Mikita his assistant, and burst straight into the steam room.

"Abraham, my friend," he cried, "do you hear me?" For it was impossible to make out anyone in the steam.

"Is that you, Mordche?"

"Yes, it is. The Emperor has answered."

"What does he say?"

"I don't know yet. Put on your clothes in a hurry. Lewitzki came for me. He said that the Chancellor has written that I'm going to get a jubilee present from the Emperor."

"What did he say about the thirty crowns?"

"I'm supposed to go to the Provost Marshal's immediately."

"Why did the Emperor write to the Provost Marshal when he could have written direct to you? But wait a minute, I'm going to get dressed and come with you."

"You're going? We're all going!" came a shout from the benches on which the bathers sat. In a minute the bath-house was empty. Mordche went in front, followed by all the bath-house customers, many of them with their beards still dripping with moisture.

"Mordche," some of them begged, "put in

a good word for us. Don't forget your friends and neighbors in the hour of your happiness."

THE procession grew. Women left their stoves, children their play. Soon they all stood before the office of the Provost Marshal. Only Mordche was allowed in by Lewitzki. The others had to wait outside. Lewitzki locked the door behind him and accompanied Mordche to the Provost Marshal's private office.

He knocked on the door and cried in an official voice: "Mordche Lew, *shames!* Go in please!"

"Are you Mr. Mordche Lew?" asked the Provost Marshal.

"Don't you know me, Mr. Provost Marshal?"

"Of course I know you. But your identity has to be ascertained officially. You wrote a letter to His Majesty, the Emperor, concerning a fine of two-hundred-and-eighty-six-thousand-three-hundred-and-twenty crowns. Is that correct or isn't it?"

"Excuse me, Mr. Provost Marshal. I and my friend Deaf Abraham wrote to the Emperor that I'd been fined this sum—I don't really know how much it is—because of a package that didn't belong to me. And I wouldn't have bothered the Emperor about that, except that they took thirty crowns away from me. If Berl the shoemaker hadn't fixed our shoes in the expectation that the Emperor would return the thirty crowns he took away from me, my children would be running around barefoot right now."

"This is not a matter of thirty crowns," the Provost Marshal interrupted him. "His Majesty has graciously deigned to read your letter and has ordered his Chancellery to remit one-hundred-and-forty-three-thousand-one-hundred-and-sixty crowns of your fine by way of grace. So that you now only owe the Imperial treasury another one-hundred-and-forty-three-thousand-one-hundred-and-sixty crowns plus accumulated fees, from

which thirty crowns have been deducted. Will you be good enough to remit this remainder at once? For rarely has a subject been granted such a favor. Please sign this document signifying your grateful and obedient acceptance of this gift of one hundred-and-forty-three-thousand-one-hundred-and-sixty crowns."

Mordche signed and waited.

"What are you waiting for?" asked the Provost Marshal.

"For the money," said he.

"What money?"

"The money I signed for and gratefully and obediently accepted. Or is it paid at the tax collector's?"

"Don't you understand Mr. Mordche? Half your fine has been remitted to you. The thirty crowns were deducted."

"And who's going to pay Berl the shoemaker for fixing the children's shoes?"

"Mr. Mordche, you will have to try to show yourself worthy of His Majesty's magnanimity by paying the remainder of your fine as quickly as possible."

With this the interview ended.

AS MORDCHE came out of the Provost Marshal's office, he was surrounded by hundreds of people in a flash. "Is it true," he was asked, "what Lewitzki's been telling us? Is it true that the Emperor made you a gift of almost a hundred-and-fifty thousand crowns for his jubilee?"

"It's true," said Mordche, "but God in Heaven knows how I'm going to pay Berl the shoemaker who needs the money so badly. My poor thirty crowns for which my sister had to work so hard—but it's not for nothing that they say that the rich don't understand the poor."

"Long live His Majesty!" someone shouted, "long may he live!"

And the Sereth band, which had heard about the great event and was now assembled outside the building, truck up the Imperial hymn, "United fast with Hapsburg's crown, eternally Austria's fate will be."



## AUSTRIA: WAY-STATION OF EXODUS

### *Pages from a Correspondent's Notebook*

HAL LEHRMAN

VIENNA (July 1946)—Three boys, aged about seven, were furiously at work in a corner of the common room, stuffing fresh white bread into their faces as fast as it could go. It was beautiful bread smeared thick with butter. In the other hand, each held a chunk of the black-weeviled bread saved from the journey out of Poland. They didn't seem sure the miracle of the loaves would last. . . .

This is a newly requisitioned Austrian schoolhouse of Robertus Platz. During the week, 240 Jewish orphans plodded into Vienna—from Hungary, Rumania, and the Sub-Carpathian Ukraine—and eighty-one more arrived today from Poland. Yesterday all the kids received candy, in bright-colored boxes. The girls are still carrying the boxes with them wherever they go. For most, it was the first real candy they'd ever had. Today's another red-letter day. Half the gang is going to the movies. Probably the first time in their lives, too. The latest arrivals are upstairs, changing their rags for little dresses and suits donated by the Joint Distribution Committee. This normally sleepy Viennese quarter is alive with squeals of delight and anticipation.

Small-fry Palestinian colonists make as much racket as any group of youngsters anywhere. But the childish noises here come oddly from these little old men and women with worn-out faces perched on undernourished bodies. Ages

range from five to seventeen. Apart from malnutrition, the commonest ailment is scabies. In one group of fifty-eight children from Ruthenia, thirty-one have it. Parents are mostly a hazy memory. Some fathers and mothers were last seen filing toward the gas house or the ovens. A few faded out of sight in trains bound for places like Auschwitz. Many of the Hungarian fathers and mothers were pushed into holes chopped through the Danube ice.

Everybody wants to stick together until Palestine. Each group, on its trek toward Austria, took time out for Hebrew classes. "I'm going to work in a *kibbutz*," Miriam Klein, thirteen, announces breathlessly. "Palestine is a rich country near the Mediterranean and it isn't being used enough and we can grow lots of vegetables there." Her parents were deported from Bucharest to Bergen-Belsen. "I haven't had a letter from them in two years," she says.

For these kids, at least, Austria is the end of the underground railway. Too weak and sick for further adventures, if they travel at all from now on, they'll go legally, with Palestine certificates. Meanwhile, they're being healed and fattened up. To the basic UNRRA ration of 1040 calories daily, the JDC is adding enough to make it almost 3000, much better than any adult DP or Austrian is getting today. The chap who drove me out here this morning, Sergeant Mark Breslow of Leeds, England, takes care of the food, clothing, and welfare supplies. He's spent five of his twenty-five years in the British Army, three of them in Africa. Until now he's been a JDC volunteer, but he's signing up full-time when his hitch ends. "This is the only part of my war that makes sense."

The school was requisitioned by the DP section of the United States Forces in Austria. USFA is readying a six-acre provincial estate in our zone as a nutrition and rest camp for the orphans. A first batch will move in as soon as the Army has evacuated the civilians now living on the estate, the Burgl Gut at St. Wolfgang. The place has four airy modern houses, surrounded by trees, grass, flowers, and sunshine. It's near a lake, too.

Joseph Silber, chief of JDC operations for Austria, has a new project to combat one of

This is the third of a series of five sections from the personal travel journal of HAL LEHRMAN, whose reports on Central Europe, the Balkans, and the Near East have gained him a wide reputation for thoughtful and penetrating comment on the problems that confront the human beings who live in these troubled areas. Readers of COMMENTARY are already familiar with Mr. Lehrman's work. In addition, he has written for the *New York Herald Tribune*, the *Nation*, and *PM*, and in England for the *News Chronicle*, *Daily Express*, *New Statesman and Nation*, *Fortnightly Review*, and *Picture Post*. Mr. Lehrman is at present completing a book on his experiences in the Balkans, which will be published by Appleton. He was born in New York in 1911, and graduated from Cornell in 1931.

the deadliest of DP maladies—lethargy. "Thousands of people sit in camps month after month, with nothing to do but wait. Morale can't stand too much of that kind of treatment. Work therapy will help, maybe. We've bought 25,000 yards of cloth for two camps, Bad Gastein in the Salzburg area and Bindermickl in Linz. Altogether, that means 4,000 people, including about 200 tailors. We'll try to give them something to do, a chance to make clothing for themselves. If it works, we'll supply enough material to make suits and dresses for everybody in the camps."

### Underground: Main-Line Depot

THE Rothschild Hospital here has been drafted as a reception center for refugees coming in from Poland. Sixteen Jewish doctors are working backbreaking shifts. Last month they processed 6,600 transients—a daily average of 220 vermin-ridden fugitives.

Theoretically, the basic ration distributed to DP's is equal in all zones, but it's only 800 calories in the British zone, where there are about 2,000 Jews, and even worse for the 500 Jews in the French zone. Red Cross packages left over from the PW camps are running short. Nobody knows how many refugees the Russians have and what they're eating because the Russians permit no inspection of their zone by UNRRA or JDC. In the zones of the Western armies, JDC gives enough extra food to equalize the standard for all at a minimum health level of 2,300 calories.

All this movement of refugees, of course, is tremendously illegal, but the military authorities blink and cooperate. I don't think this sympathy is exclusively due to the Army's feeling that the influx couldn't be held back anyway. A genuine sympathy exists. One very high American officer, who shall be nameless, told me, "I could put a division up there on the line but it wouldn't stop the Jews." I happen to know that this same officer gave the underground railway directors a blackboard lecture showing them convenient places on the frontier through which the refugees might slip. "Hell, we know these fellows have a real organization (though we wouldn't know how it works), so we save ourselves a headache by cooperating with it," he pretended to me.

Colonel Logan Gray, the head man for DP's in the British zone, gives a similar impression of good-humored acceptance of the inevitable. The Colonel is a blimp in everything but mentality. He wears a swagger stick, a superbly trimmed mustache, and apple-red cheeks. The prescribed iron-gray hair is on top of all this. He also grunts and wheezes. Hollywood couldn't have done a better casting job. But he

has this "Jewish matter" efficiently figured out. "I find it good policy," he twinkles, "to play along with the chaps who can turn the tap on and off. They buzz me and announce they have a thousand for my zone and I usually manage to settle for about 500."

### Danube Blues

THERE'S very little waltzing in this Vienna. The dancers are too hungry, the ladies are cutting up the living-room curtains for clothing, and the violins squeak very faintly beneath the ruins. I regret to admit I've had only two musical evenings since arrival in the land of Lehar and Johann Strauss. I've sat through an anemic performance of *The White Horse Inn*, and endured a ninety-minute "revue" in a basement night club where patrons indulge themselves in a thirty-cent glass of lemonade without the lemon. The operetta's book has been rewritten to include sad jokes about calories and the blessings of Western democracy; the "revue" is a dreary string of burlesque-style skits, except that the comic chases a piece of black-market ham instead of a blonde. . . . At the moment, this capital of deathless song and café wit is less concerned with yesterday's *Wienerlieder* and today's *feuilleton* than with scrounging enough food somehow to keep alive until tomorrow. For the Austrians, culture has reduced itself to the elementals of physical and national preservation in a spiritual wasteland of hunger and Four Power military occupation. For the Jews, the matter boils down even further to the gaunt crisis of individual survival.

Technically, Austria's own Jews aren't DP's. Austria is supposed to be home for her 6,000 Jews. These are all who've returned of the 185,000 here before Hitler. The figure of 185,000 does not include the "Nuremburg Jews," the *Mischlings*—unbelievers who were persecuted or butchered because of a Semitic grandmother. The 40,000 professing Jews who went to North and South America are presumably alive, as are the 9,000 who escaped to Palestine before the Nazis choked off immigration in 1941. Another 22,000 scattered to the Far East and Africa; the bulk of them survived the hazards of war. Nobody can say how many were killed of the 55,000 who fled to other European countries. Probably nearly 50 per cent are dead, strangled in the same net which swept 43,000 deported Viennese Jews into the extermination camps of Poland and western Russia. In the Austrian provinces, perhaps 100 Jews remain of the 15,000 once there. Two thousand so-called "U-boats," Jews who lay submerged in Vienna throughout the war, came to the surface with liberation; the rest are deportees who found the road back.

This ghost of opulent Jewish Vienna is on the way to a fading exit. Two-thirds of the survivors are past forty-five years. Scarcely 200 are less than seventeen. Early this year, more than 60 per cent revealed in a questionnaire that they wanted to emigrate as soon as possible. This 60 per cent included practically all the young and middle-aged. Apart from a handful of professional men and civil servants, only 300 have jobs. They work mainly for the United States Army or for Jewish community organizations supported by foreign funds. "Vienna is *kaput* for us Jews," they tell you. "We were the traders and the salesmen, and there's nothing left to sell."

A year after the Nazi defeat, over 30 per cent of the Viennese Jews still subsist on JDC food packages. The community has to maintain three asylums and soup kitchens for support of the homeless. Nobody has yet received his shop or factory back, and virtually nobody recovered his house or apartment, except those Jews who were here during the upheaval of the Soviet arrival. The present regime distinguishes meticulously between the pre-Anschluss Nazis and the Nazis who took the vow afterwards. If one of the latter is occupying your apartment, it's up to you to find him another before you can make him get out, an impossibility in this city where one-fourth of the dwellings were turned to rubble by the war. Austrian laws against eviction of tenants were always severe. These laws were enthusiastically ignored by the Nazis in Jewish cases, but have become gospel again for the new democratic government. Vienna Jewry possessed 60,000 homes. The Jewish community is pressing a pitiful 1,000 claims, with no satisfaction to date.

Haidi took me this morning to the Jewish *Kultusgemeinde* at Schottenring 25. Haidi looks like one of Wagner's Teutonic handmaidens, with a name to match—Haidi Schmidt von Boltenstern. But no Hitler *Jugend*, she. After so much time with Jewish DP's, her Magdeburg German shows traces of a Yiddish accent.

We climbed three stony flights to the Community's drab offices. Little groups of tired, angry faces, pale with the wax of the KZ-Lager. With Haidi on hand to unravel the more complicated sentences, I sat on a rickety stool at a planked table while *Gemeinde* executives explained how their Community has been trying to recover some of the \$900,000,000 the Nazis stole. "Chancellor Figl promised us equal treatment with all sufferers of Nazism. Now we are told to press our claims, like any other citizens, through the regular political parties. Meanwhile, representatives of these parties make

speeches in Parliament to the effect that claims for restitution of furniture, goods, and machinery taken from Jewish properties (these properties have been stripped clean of everything except debts) must be addressed to the Germans."

The *Arbeiter Zeitung*, organ of the Socialist party, declared recently that the Jews are not entitled to special aid, since "only one-sixth of the 34,000,000 victims of National Socialism were Jews." Today, Oskar Pollack, its editor, assured me that "the Jews have an undisputed moral claim, but Austria is flat broke, there is not enough living space or food to go around, or any economic activity to help reintegration of the Jews or anybody else. One must also consider the people who occupy Jewish flats which they didn't take from the Jews, but only after eviction of the Nazis. Many of these new tenants were non-Jewish inmates of concentration camps. They found shelters in the early days of liberation, when the Communist party installed by the Red Army redistributed more than 30,000 flats in Vienna."

Similar tenderness for non-Jewish tenants in Jewish homes was exhibited this afternoon by Vice-Chancellor Adolf Schaerf. The good Herr Schaerf, who may head the next Austrian government, is the number-one man in the Socialist party, champions of democracy between the dominant right-wing Volkspartei (People's party) and the Red Army's Communist protégés. Could it be that the Socialists are also interested in votes? "There are 300,000 persons homeless in Vienna today," the Vice-Chancellor said. "We tried very hard to throw out all the fascists who joined the Nazis after the Anschluss, but the majority party refused to permit this. The Volkspartei says that only the higher Nazis and war criminals should be punished. The liberating Russian Army put up placards assuring the little Nazis they had nothing to fear. So the Volkspartei can ask us, with some reason, why we should be sterner than the Russians."

Another leading Socialist contends that the Russians are more responsible than anybody else for the Jews being homeless. Under the Potsdam Agreement, all ex-German property in the Soviet Zone of Occupation falls to the Russians. They have blandly interpreted this to include Jewish property illegally seized by the Germans. Also, it is said, the Communists took good care to appropriate the best Jewish flats and buildings, with Jewish furniture and fixtures delivered to them by the Red Army as a free gift.

The Socialists, it should be noted, feel that they too have a legitimate beef in the matter

of restitution. At the moment of liberation, it was the Communists who grabbed the Socialist schools, cooperatives, and playgrounds, which had been seized by the Austrian fascists in 1934 and were later inherited by the Nazis. The Communists calculated they were going to replace the Socialists as the party of the Vienna workers. Subsequent elections demonstrated the contrary, but the Communists have not yet made full restitution. This leaves the Socialists less sensitive than they might normally be to the quiet outrage now being perpetrated on the Jews.

### Swastika in the Closet

It is even suggested that the government is going slow on Jewish restitution for the Jews' own sake. Too much haste might single out the Jews as the specially privileged in a time of distress for all Austrians. This would boomerang against the Jews, planting bigger anti-Semitic seeds than ever in a fertile soil. Characteristically, the Socialists privately warn you that Nazism, having been smashed as an organized force, is no longer a threat, but that clerical fascism, Austria's special brand of totalitarianism, is a very muscular specter. They point out that all the present right-wingers in power, from Chancellor Figl down, reached their political maturity during, or thanks to, the Dolfuss-Schuschnigg authoritarian regimes. The older leaders, most of whom were inmates of Nazi concentration camps, are probably good democrats, the Socialists admit. But the Volkspartei's younger stalwarts know no other democracy than the 1934-38 variety. Another disturbing sign is the re-emergence of proved Catholic fascists, now wearing the martyrdom of the concentration camps, to positions of influence in government and party. Ex-Heimwehr leader Raab, dropped from the Provisional Government because of Allied objections, is nevertheless chairman of the Volkspartei's parliamentary group. Dolfuss' governor of Upper Austria is again governor of Upper Austria—in the American zone. Dolfuss' governor of Lower Austria is also back at his old job—in the Russian zone. The Styrian leader of the fascist Fatherland Front is a member of Parliament. Schuschnigg's *Landesrat* in Lower Austria is now deputy governor there. The Socialists will agree that current Volkspartei policy is democratic enough, especially by contrast with what the Communists offer. But they will take no bets on the permanent throttling of the clerical fascist beast, and the plucking of its anti-Socialist, anti-Semitic sting.

Though Jews here share the gloom over a possible "Christian revival," they lack the Socialist complacency over the present condition

of outright Nazism. They shock you with the disclosure, easily confirmed, that Councillor Riebel, highly placed in the Austrian republic's administration for Jewish property until ousted after Jewish protests last fortnight, is the same Councillor Riebel who managed the property of dispossessed Jews throughout the Nazi regime. Worse, a Doctor Scholz, who still officiates in the Penzing *Bezirk* of Vienna over claims for state support of the Nazi terror's victims, was himself an influential Nazi. According to Dr. Krell, Jewish leader of the KZ-Verband (Concentration Camp Association), "Every high official in the Austrian government has Nazis in his family or among his friends. Protecting them is good insurance, as well as a sentimental obligation."

Outwardly, the Americans here are breezily aware of the need for thorough de-Nazification. Office walls of the American military are adorned with admonitory placards like "Lest We Forget." When you walk into USACA headquarters on the Ring, you see a poem posted at the bottom of the stairs and attributed to one Joseph Cats, a 17th-century rhymester, that goes as follows:

*When the Hun is poor and down  
He's the humblest man in town;  
But once he climbs and holds the rod,  
He smites his fellow-man—and God.*

Nevertheless, perfectly honest Americans in authority here say that de-Nazification is easier said than done. When the Nazis are purged, it seems there's not much left to run the country with. It is sometimes difficult to fill even the purge committees (*Sonderkommissionen*) with competent Austrians who aren't themselves slightly tainted. The result has been a tendency (which the British also admit) to go slow by distinguishing between high Nazis and low, major job and minor job, city and province. Where the purge is carried through without regard for possible administrative chaos, results can be crippling. In education, for example, 280 Nazi university professors out of a total of 430 are being removed, and only 110 competent non-Nazis are available to replace them; while in the elementary and high schools, 13,000 one-time Nazi teachers are being dismissed, but 4,500 others will hang on until suitable replacements can be found or trained.

### Land of the Toothbrush Mustache

LINZ-SALZBURG—This is the country of fascist and Brown-Shirt recruitment. Out here the birth, growth, and present survival of Nazism seem more plausible. After all, Vienna was always "Red Vienna." Today, in the middle of



the capital's bleakly grandiose ruins, one sees little except drab despair and lethargic efforts for day-to-day subsistence. But here in the countryside under American control, and southward in British Styria, the rolling lands and postcard villages have escaped the leveling of the war, at least to the naked eye, and the historic habitat of Austrian fanaticism stands unchanged. Fantastic doubles of Adolf Hitler—complete with toothbrush mustache and down-combed hair—meet you on every street. The effect is heightened by the short leather breeches, green suspenders, and feathered hat. The past year hasn't prepared me for the arrogance I somehow detect in the face and bearing of the Austrian provincial. In the Balkans, from which I've just come, people of German origin are anything but cocky. Those remnants of the *Volksdeutsch* minorities in Hungary and Rumania who have not yet been kicked out generally keep discreetly quiet. The only Germans I saw in Yugoslavia were war prisoners, wearing the rags of their uniforms and an apathy induced by unrelenting forced labor with pick and shovel. But in rural Austria, at least in the Allied zones, the sobering pill of repression has not been swallowed.

I was walking down Linz's main stem and talking of all this to Hilda Selm, and she said: "I feel that way, too. And I have to live with it out here. Maybe I shouldn't have left New York. Maybe I'm too biased to do a JDC job properly. When I think of what these people did, I fill up with hate. Nothing in the way they behave now gives me any less reason to hate them. You know, I have a bunch of girls who work for me at the office. They all live at the far end of town, and every morning they get on the street car together. It's always crowded, and every day some passenger is sure to suggest loudly that there'd be much more room if the *verdammte Juden* got off."

L—, my local interpreter and guide, says the Austrians welcomed Hitler because they expected to get all the good jobs and the Jewish property. "I was in Vienna when the Germans arrived. Why did the Austrians finally turn anti-Nazi? Because Hitler's people took the jobs and Jewish loot for themselves, that's all. But the Austrians stayed faithful to their anti-Semitism. Now they're anti-American as well. They're bigger Jew-haters than ever, because they blame us for all their troubles. They claim that now, at last, we are really the Chosen People. Meanwhile, the government gives us nothing. If we have a little more to eat, we owe it all to the Jews of America and other countries, not one morsel to any Austrian. Austria may be quieter than

Poland right now, but the Jews here will have as many reasons to get out if they wait too long."

Col. H— of the American Military Government in Salzburg is enlightening on de-Nazification: "I'd rather have the little Nazi kept in his little job, where I can see him all the time and know what he's up to, than let him get fired and then lose sight of him in the underground. Most of these small-shot *Parteigenossen* never were more than stooges anyway. They can't do any harm if we keep tabs on them—and they're pretty good material as civil servants. But if we let them go, they slide back to Nazism. It's no use kidding ourselves, living conditions in Austria aren't good, and it's easy to get disgruntled over the new democracy, especially if you're conditioned that way anyhow. Inside a radius of thirty-five miles around here, I know a half-dozen groups of Nazi-minded people. Naturally, they don't hold public meetings, but they get a lot of talking done inside each other's homes." H— also complains that de-Nazification doesn't leave enough non-Nazis to fill all the vacant administrative jobs. "Right now we've got more violators of Military Government and Austrian laws," he confesses, "than we have judges to try them. I've had to build a special barracks to house my overflow prisoners. We need twice as many judges as are now available. In fact, I've asked for permission to use judges who were only nominal Nazis in order to speed up prosecutions of Nazis."

I might have been more impressed by this mournful tale if the Colonel had not then called in Baron Karl Karwinski for the rest of the interview. This character was an old-regime police chief and Minister of Home Security. Thanks to Socialist outcry, he was prevented from entering the current Austrian government, but this didn't block him from getting comfortably established here—as chief political adviser to the American Occupation Force. Karwinski looked and sounded like a modest, reticent bookkeeper. He protested that he had always been a mere civil servant carrying out the orders of his superior, but he didn't mind describing Dollfuss as a sincere democrat "who suffered very much because the Socialists compelled him to take action against them." As for the present state of affairs, he suggested that each party is trying to edit the de-Nazification laws so that the Nazis will feel grateful toward that particular party. He expressed the pious opinion to me that "what is really needed is a purge of mind and spirit, in which there has been retrogression since the end of the war." Concerning the Jews, he began by being generous: "Whatever wrongs the Jews

did to Austria before the war have to be forgiven because their slaughter by the Nazis is atonement enough." Then sadly: "Isn't it a pity that the Jews are now spoiling everything by making money out of Austria's misery! The DP camps are all black-market centers, while our own people are starving. This will be difficult for the Austrians to forget."

The Colonel was insistent that I join him on a picnic in the afternoon. Karwinski is coming, also the Colonel's blond secretary—"She's a princess," H— confided, "her family's sure been having a tough time." I got out of it only by pleading I had to go to a DP camp "to see how comfortably those Jews are living." My excuse was taken at face value.

So it makes some sense when Leon Fischer, the local JDC man, says: "Brother, I want to be out of here when the American Army leaves."

### Deluge

IN PROVINCIAL Austria, too, I get a clearer view of the pattern of Jewish migration. Vienna's perspective seems to reduce the stream of refugees from Poland and the Balkans to a trickle; the open countryside restores it to its true proportions of a flood. Vienna simply processes the refugees, then sends them out into the provinces, where they have to be fed and sheltered. Linz and Salzburg are on the direct way, by rail or highway, to Bavaria. Now that the Italian frontier is heavily watched, Bavaria and the rest of the American Zone in Germany have become the nearest thing to the heaven of Palestine for refugees crowding into Austria. In the early part of this year, the monthly transient average was between one and two thousand; but in April and May it jumped to four thousand, and now it's six thousand. The latest effort by the American military to relieve this congestion is the conversion of a big internment camp at Wegscheid from a pen for SS prisoners into a shelter for Jews. Wegscheid, five kilometers west of Linz, has received two thousand refugees since it opened three weeks ago. The Army is already worried about where to put the overflow after the capacity of eight thousand is reached. "We *could* make it twelve thousand," the camp officer says, "if we put in double-decker beds again. When we had the Storm Troopers here, there were twelve thousand of them. But it's pretty rough." Wegscheid is still fenced around by a double wall of high barbed wire. The whole refugee-shelter system in the American part of Austria is moving toward a crisis. The Army has ten camps now, notably at Bindermickl, Braunau (Hitler's Braunau!), Kleinmuenchen, Bad Ischl, Bad Gastein, Franz

Joseph—and a place with the gruesome name of New Palestine. The current population of this camp network is ten thousand—and the top capacity is only four thousand more.

A new complication is the sudden Russian decision to expell all the remaining *Volksdeutsche* from the Soviet Zone. This may dump tens of thousands of Germans into the American Zone, which lies across the shortest line to Germany. The pressure raises hob with the so-called "Green Plan," a hush-hush technique that the Army has worked out with the directors of the undercover Jewish transient movement for the smooth accommodation and swift transportation of refugees passing through Austria. I am assured, however, that "under no circumstances will we permit deported Germans from the Russian Zone to upset our arrangements for the Jews." Immediately after the Russian expulsion decree, American DP officers received orders from Vienna to survey the zone for emergency housing of fifty-four thousand possible arrivals.

The "Green Plan" is further upset by the change of policy by American authorities in Germany. "I guess," said Captain G—, pointing to the five telephones on his desk, "I'm the busiest American executive this side of the Atlantic. It used to be simple. You see, we have two kinds of camps. One is for semi-permanent DP's, the people who are too old or sick or tired to travel any way but 'white' from now on. They're waiting for regular visas or certificates. Then there are the camps for the transients who want to move on and out as quickly as possible, traveling 'black.' It was easy to handle this because the semi-permanent clients were a fixed number, and the transients could shuttle out of Austria with no trouble after a few days' rest here. But now more Jews are coming into Austria and fewer than ever are getting out. Until this month there was no official admission into Germany. All that this really meant was that the Third Army over there just winked and let the Jews pour over because there was no way the Jews could get official visas. But now the Third Army has decided to make entry legal. Sounds like an improvement, doesn't it? The Jews go in as certified groups, each okayed from American headquarters in Berlin. But Berlin's only handing out about five hundred passes per week. Everybody else is turned back. Meanwhile we keep getting fifteen hundred extra Jews each week into Austria. It's simple arithmetic." (As I edit these notes, in mid-November, the total number of Jews in Austria has climbed to thirty-eight thousand.)

An "underground-railway" supervisor asks

me why it is that "the Americans in Austria are so kind to us, but on the German side the Americans have some peculiar reactions." One of his assistants was arrested at the border last week while leading in an official group. "Our papers were kosher; it was just a mistake about the date of arrival. Well, they put my man in jail. I go over and object. They arrest me, too. They put us both in a cell. All right. But it's a cell with four SS officers. Should that be? The Nazis are eating three times a day. The American lieutenant in charge says we shall eat only once a day. Maybe we would still be there, but the JDC saved us. Mr. Fischer went to the jail and said to the lieutenant: 'Why are these men in jail? If you won't release them you ought to arrest me, too.' Fischer is an American. They let us go. But why only one meal a day?"

### Revolt of the Weary

A COMMITTEE from the semi-permanent camp at Bindermickl calls at the JDC office in Linz. "Shouldn't we have fresh vegetables sometimes?" the chairman demands. "The Austrians have fruit but we must eat canned goods—and this month no extra butter and candy for the children. How can you keep the people out of the black market or expect them not to make trouble?"

Thus far, the JDC plan for work therapy has gone begging. A committee came down from Bad Gastein, inspected the JDC cloth, said it was no good, refused to have anything to do with it, and went away. At Bindermickl, the JDC put up notices calling for tailors, dressmakers, and seamstresses. They would be paid the normal Austrian wage scale, plus a food allowance and first choice of the finished garments. Only a handful answered. The tailors know they can get ten times the regular price if they cut the cloth privately. The rest of the people are too tired and indifferent to bother. A few of the radicals have started a campaign to force the JDC to distribute three yards per person and let each individual himself take care of converting them into coats and pants. The Joint has refused, because it would negate the whole point of the work-therapy idea and dump a lot of goods into the black market. As a result, the JDC is now being assailed as an "enemy of the people." The radicals have put out a manifesto calling the American relief workers "thieves, outcasts of society," who are holding the cloth in order to sell it themselves on the black market. The manifesto demands distribution from the JDC warehouse to each individual DP. "We must call the guilty to account," it concludes. "We must band together to fight the dark elements."

Nothing is going to happen, of course. The mass of the refugees are too weary even for indignation. Jews undoubtedly are in the black market, but the extent of their activity is greatly overrated. When the Army carried out a room-to-room raid at Bindermickl, it reportedly found only fifteen small caches of illegal goods among twenty-one hundred residents. The surprising thing, I think, is that there are so many Jews who are *not* in the black market. After what they have endured, and now the endless waiting to quit this hated Europe, they can hardly be expected to show enthusiasm for hiring themselves out to the Austrians, or even to their fellow Jews, at the prevailing low rates in nearly worthless Austrian schillings. The years of persecution, in which only the shrewd and the lucky escaped extermination, have developed a new and unique code of ethics. The Jew who sells his rationed cigarettes to an Austrian at ten times their value feels there is much more he could do to that Austrian before the score is settled. He feels, in fact, that the world damn well owes him a living. Remembering what the world has done to him, it is difficult to hand down judgment.

The passionate longing for exodus, for the highroad to Palestine, mounts toward desperation as the weeks and months go by. But the longing is acutest among the children, too young to be without hope. There was a group of seventy youngsters who arrived in Mullen and were slated to proceed to Munich as soon as the authorization arrived. To make them more comfortable while they waited, it was proposed to send them to Bad Gastein, the best equipped camp in Austria. But they refused to get on the trucks—because Bad Gastein is south of Mullen, not west of it, not on the road to Munich, which is on the road to Palestine. "Only toward Eretz Yisrael," the kids chanted. They stayed in Mullen.

It sounded funny in Linz when a rabbi stormed into the JDC office and said he must have a jeep immediately to take him to Salzburg; a Jew up there needed him for a *bris*, and the man would go berserk if everything wasn't done right and properly on the prescribed eighth day. But it isn't quite that funny. I've met the man. He and his wife came out of Auschwitz. They left their eight-year-old daughter and five-year-old son in the crematorium there. This new baby is a fresh start. . . .

### Pimpernel of Zion

T—, who gives every impression of being a Salzburg merchant, turns out to be the chief Jewish Pimpernel of this area. He lived

through the war in a Latvian village, protected by blond hair, green eyes, and forged Aryan papers. He told me only what he wanted me to know: "Money? When I need it, I have a place where I can get it. . . . Name of our organization? We have many. Names aren't important. Boris was the name of the man who first handled the movements here. Long after he left, refugees kept asking for Boris. . . . How do they get across all the closed borders before they reach Austria? Look. Here is a frontier. And a guard. So we drive them up to a mile from the guard. Then the people go around him, through a forest or across a river. If they get caught, they get caught. Finally they get sent back. So they try again, on the second night, and the third night, and they get across. Sometimes we have a nice paper with many stamps and we drive right up to the guard. . . . My politics? I was a Revisionist once. In this movement, I have no party now. I am simply a Jew. . . . We help anybody who wants help and is willing to suffer. Last night we sent off a woman of seventy years. Last week we had eighteen rabbis in one solid group, from Hungary, Rumania, and Poland."

T— escorted me through the Franz Joseph transient camp, a former barracks. The dormitory was crammed with eighteen double-decker beds. The mattresses were bags stitched from potato sacks. "The bags are filled with straw and rags," he explained. "Two sleep on each sack. That makes seventy-two for this room. Quite normal." The adjoining kitchen was equipped with big army vats and tubs, all spotless. "We have a permanent staff of fifty volunteers. They do the cleaning and cooking. From the Austrian government we get *gur nit mit gur nit*. UNRRA does nothing for transients either. The transients are 'black'; they're not supposed to exist. JDC does everything. Our people come in starved after weeks of traveling. They need even more than the regular rations. Without the Joint, everything would be impossible."

From here T— drove us across Salzburg to Camp Mulln. This was once a brewery and *Bierstube*. The white-plastered corridors are traced with pencil-scribbles, the names of travelers already departed for Palestine. In the tavern, the old German and pig-Latin drinking legends still look down from the walls, signs saying "*Singen und Lärmen Verboten*," pic-

tures of foaming mugs. But in the dining-room, this being Friday night, the air is hot with the smell of potato soup, and a hundred young emigrants are singing Yiddish songs, while overhead a giant placard on the wall proclaims in Hebrew letters two feet high: "If I forget Zion, may my right hand wither."

Took the broad and speedy road to Munich this morning on Hitler's *Autobahn*. Crossing the frontier was absurdly easy; the white-helmeted American M.P. just glanced at my war correspondent's shoulder tabs and waved me past. If you have the right shoulder tabs or the right papers, everything is simple. But earlier today, on jeeping out of Salzburg, I had looked in on the cruelly named camp of "New Palestine," where 450 Jews without a country have been spinning out life's monotony waiting for a scrap of paper to authorize another few miles in their tortured hegira.

This camp—a cluster of three two-story stucco buildings in a Nazi workers' housing project—is occupied mainly by an Agudah group. A low, impromptu structure built like a gold-rush mining town's dance-hall sits in a weedy plot inside the enclosure and serves as synagogue, schoolroom, meeting-house, and recreation center. Around a large table near the window was a scene out of Galicia: the rabbi expounding the Torah, his aged fingers caressing a snowy beard, and all around him his hushed and listening disciples, their *payess* curled up from pale, ascetic faces under traditional black pancake hats. I came upon this assembly in my uniform, as strange as Mars, but nobody gave me a second look, and the droning voice went steadily on. The leader of the camp halted his kosher ministrations when I found him in the community kitchen. "With knives and stones they drove us from Poland," he said, "and here we wait, with only our faith to keep our hearts up. We have all voted not to go 'black' any more. There are too many old ones, too many little ones. We want to keep our *kibbutz* together. One day, maybe, the Palestine certificates will come, and then we will have work to do again. Meanwhile, we study." The leader's son, a youth of twenty, had less philosophy. He looked at me with his old eyes when I asked him how he spent his days while his father supervised the kosher pots. In a toneless voice, he replied: "*Ich mitche mich*."



# FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

## MY FATHER AND MR. PRESTON

### A Story

HAROLD KAPLAN

ALL of us were curious and excited when the Prestons came to occupy the flat above ours, for they were not like the tenants we had known before. We lived in the steel-mill section of a mid-west city where everyone seemed to be Polish and poor; it was at the height of the depression, and each family had its own story of bad luck; they held off on the rent, paid it occasionally, and finally moved in with relatives or to cheaper flats. My father agonized daily in search of his own work, finding it for small and irregular periods as a carpenter jobber. But he developed a mad querulousness toward our tenants, believing that they conspired to avoid or delay their rent payments, and that they spent what they had on beer and whiskey, movies, and probably gambling. My father said that to be poor and still spend money on these things was a sin. And we learned in our own lives that money was only for food, necessary clothing, and the defense of our house against the mortgage.

It is perhaps laboring the obvious to say that stories often have as much to tell us about such perennial themes as the adjustment of the Jewish immigrant to American culture, and the role of the father and other familial relationships therein, as do social science studies and reportage. HAROLD KAPLAN is instructor in English at Rutgers University. A captain in the Army Air Force, he traveled to England, France, and back to the United States, where he participated in the compilation of the official history of the United States Army Air Force. Mr. Kaplan was born in Chicago in 1916, and attended the University of Chicago. This is his first published story.

When Mr. Preston introduced himself, we were pleased to find that he wore a business suit and a white shirt, that his name did not end in "ski," and that he spoke English without an accent. He was a Congregationalist minister from the East who had arrived as a missionary from the better and wealthier world outside to work with a social agency in the district.

My brothers and I were impressed, and we could see that Mr. Preston was what we were learning in school to identify as a *real* American.

When Mrs. Preston came downstairs in the middle of the day to borrow sugar, wearing a street dress and looking as if she were Sunday company, my mother would become speechless, losing what broken syllables of English she had. A woman who kept a maid regularly and did not wear an apron or a house dress on weekdays might as well have belonged to the Czar's nobility; it frightened my mother when she received a check from Mrs. Preston and remembered that the Prestons were actually tenants, paying tribute to her each month.

My father was elated and relieved to have such people in his flat, in great part because he stopped worrying about the rent, but also because Mr. Preston was an educated man and a rabbi among the Gentiles. But he remained aloof from our admiring chorus; he could see across an insuperable distance that Mr. Preston was a *goy*. Withdrawing to his passionate orthodoxy as a Jew, he was dignified and cold, unbending in such slow stages that he aroused Mr. Preston's greatest affection and respect.

For with a matter-of-fact application of

the standards of the small New England town from which he came, Mr. Preston entered our traditionally Jewish home completely without self-consciousness, and he liked what he saw there. He used to say to my eldest brother that my father reminded him of his own grandfather, an Old Testament Puritan, fierce, proud, and scrupulously religious. Mr. Preston visited us regularly to see my father and, fascinated as he was, he perhaps pitied the rest of us, for everything he did had the end of lightening the atmosphere.

The best hours in an otherwise bleak day would come when Mr. Preston arrived for a taste of my mother's cooking, which he would describe with smacks and groans and an ecstatic look at the ceiling. We could expect him to visit us just after dinner, when my mother would have something warm and ready. He had his own dinner to eat upstairs later, but he was a large man with a wonderful appetite; pretending to eat only a snack, he managed to get down as much as the rest of us could eat. Meanwhile, my mother was torn between two desires: to feed the hungry man, and to avoid the anger of Mrs. Preston upstairs.

Mr. Preston was never actually invited to dinner, for my father made religious ceremonies of our meals, and was annoyed and uneasy when the large stranger happened to break in just before the first or last blessing. Besides, Mr. Preston was an uproarious clown, bringing the fantastic sound of loud laughter into the house, and my father in his early evening gloom needed an hour's silence and the comfort of food, to prepare for him.

ON A gray late winter afternoon, I sat near the kitchen stove with a book in my lap, peaceful in the knowledge that I was alone there with my mother, and my father had not yet tramped up the back stairs returning from work. With my mother busy with dinner, and in the deep warmth, which I intensified by glancing now and then at the frost on the window, I was happy. Yet as the clock ticked and the darkness came to blacken the windows, I grew restless, expecting the moment when the silent house would no longer be mine, when it would shake and echo with the arrival of the others and resume the uncertainties of our lives together.

The first slam of a door came, and I closed

my book. My mother looked up and rattled the pans as if she too had felt the sound as a signal to prepare. Waving me off, she said, "Go, go away. Let me finish the dinner. Always with your books. Your eyes will crawl out of the back of your head."

The noises came nearer. With a sharp, aggressive step, one of my two older brothers entered and asked what was for dinner. My sister followed, and looking at my gloomy face in the corner, asked, "What's the matter? Is he home already?"

When I shook my head, she sighed loudly and turned to my mother, who interrupted her before she could begin to speak.

"What do you mean, *he*? Your father, is he someone to talk about like that? Why are you such queer children, what do you want from him?"

My sister was sullen. "I want to eat something in my bedroom tonight, I'm tired."

"You'll eat with the rest, when Pa comes home." My mother's voice rose.

"I'm tired, I can't stand it. I want to eat alone," my sister wailed hopelessly.

Often enough my mother had surrendered to these tones of unhappiness, but tonight she was excited and angry, and she was more determined than ever that the forms of an ideal family life be maintained.

MY SENSE of fear leaped up sharply when I heard the sudden, hard thrust of the knob and the abrupt opening of the kitchen door. My father entered, with his broad shoulders stooped in black, sagging clothes and his face black after the day's work. He didn't speak, but threw upon us his look of anger and impatience. Under thick eyebrows and frowning forehead, his eyes judged me with a rage that allowed no forgiveness.

As my first fear subsided, it was replaced by a steady tension. I expected my father at any moment to cry out violently against us. It was only a little less punishing that his attack when it came was directed—as it most often was—against the world in general, or the people he had met that day. While he moved about preparing for dinner, the uneasiness grew, until I left the warm kitchen for another part of the house, hoping that the first hoarse, jagged utterance of my father, which sounded as if it tore through the crust of a numb rage, would

come before my mother called us to dinner.

I heard him break out at last, in Yiddish; he always spoke Yiddish to my mother. "A curse on Columbus. In the whole neighborhood do you think they can find ten Jews for a *minyan*? Ten men, ten Jews, and we can't find them for a *minyan* so a man can say *Kaddish*. A good world we have come to, this golden America!"

He had gone to the synagogue for his evening prayers, as he sometimes did when he could leave work early enough, and as usual he had found something to make him furious. To fail to form a *minyan* was really serious, and this was reflected in the conciliations my mother attempted. With her determined and steady replies, I could hear his voice lowering and his anger fading to a quieter level. I knew from experience that after we had sat down and my father had begun to taste his soup, its warmth would spread from him through the room, and we could finish the meal in what was almost a mellow silence, the silence, like everything else, dictated by my father as he ate slowly with an increasing look of detachment replacing the intense, frowning alertness of his face.

At the end of the meal the background of silence became strained. It was a brave effort to be the first to break it or move away from it and out of the room. But then there came a light knock on the door to which we all turned with a desperate eagerness. In the high-pitched voice of delight as my sister greeted him—"It's Mr. Preston!"—we all spoke, adding smiles, and moving about with relieved gestures as we explored the suddenly liberated air.

MR. PRESTON entered with an echoing exclamation of greeting that swept the silence from the room and, moving to the offered chair, he began at once to debate with my mother about what he should eat and how much. With awkward, large movements, he filled the room, his voice rolling about us in booming reassurance. He grinned at my mother, waving his arms and saying, "Too much, too much, you'll make me fat," protesting happily while she heaped a plate before him.

When he smiled we all did, and when he looked serious, we quickly did the same. It was only my father who maintained resist-

ance, and I watched with uncertainty the direct conflict between Mr. Preston's smile and my father's frown. Mr. Preston overshadowed my father and took the center of the room away from him, and it was wonderful to us to see how he could force a grudging surrender, so that my father himself had to respond to his banter.

In the early days there must have been some real shocks of anger, which my father tried to conceal from us. He would react by closing his lips tightly, ignoring the latest remark, and shutting Mr. Preston out with a shake of the head—it was impossible to break into an open rage in the face of Mr. Preston's innocence and good nature.

Sometimes Mr. Preston drew my father out on points of Orthodox ritual, and led him into a loving exposition of the various restrictions and injunctions that oppressed our lives. To us, the law meant nothing but the blank, cold insistence of my father or his whip-like rage. Mr. Preston listened with an earnestness and respect that gave us a very different view of our religion. But as we glimpsed this, my father would react coldly to some question and withdraw, making it clear that this was all foolishness.

Generally, Mr. Preston devoted himself to obvious comedy. He entertained us all, and gave us the strangest companion in a game that we ever had—my father. As the evening grew more relaxed, Mr. Preston would bring us to a climax with a series of magic tricks or an elaborate pantomime. And it was then that my father succumbed completely. Perhaps it was this that most attracted Mr. Preston—a rigid and intense man suddenly brought to freshness and innocence at his hands. He had no great art; his magic tricks were universal in the amateur's list, his jokes were ancient, and his limericks were as familiar as Mother Goose. But this was the only humor my father could accept. Ideas and topical subjects demanded a pulpit solemnity: if Mr. Preston made some whimsical comment on the news, or told a funny story about a Republican and a Democrat, my father would only take off from that point and say, for instance, yes, the Republicans were not the party for the poor man, and for that matter all politicians were grafters and crooks—speaking with a resigned bitterness that silenced us all until Mr. Preston could bring us back to good humor.

Now Mr. Preston displayed a coin, turned it over, and elaborately let my father examine it, pointing out the date. Then he flipped it into the air with his mouth open as if to swallow it, and with a shock we saw it disappear down his throat; gulping painfully, he reached over to the top pocket of my father's vest and with great casualness pulled the coin out, while my father watched with his own mouth still open and then slapped the table with a shout of laughter.

As if warmed by the exercise, Mr. Preston rose to his feet and began to crow like a cock and bark like a dog. By this time, my mother, who had been laughing and shaking helplessly at one end of the table, would run to leave the room, followed by my father's pointing finger and his exclamation of delighted scorn.

Mr. Preston brought to all of us what we lacked. Having made us noisy with laughter while he performed, he then arranged for my father to have his success and return to dominance in the room. He challenged him to a test of strength, and with my father agreeing eagerly, the table was cleared and they locked elbows and fists. Mr. Preston was a big, muscular man, much more impressive in size than my father. But the muscles of my father's arms were tested all day long in the strain of lifting timbers and pounding nails. He was the center of strength that carried us all, and he had faith in the strength of his arms as he had faith in his survival. Surely, steadily, with the consecration of purpose familiar in his face, he brought Mr. Preston's arm down to the table. Mr. Preston made much of his chagrin by trying three times, and my father's pleasure made us all happy and comfortable.

The room was quieter for a while, and then I was suddenly faced by a climax that Mr. Preston had reserved for me.

"You have been sitting there laughing at me all night," he said, "and I'm going to get even. I want you to recite some poetry for us, right now."

Panic put me in a daze, and I couldn't begin to understand why he had picked me out in this way. I guessed later that my mother had given my secrets away: talking in garrulous pride to Mr. Preston, she had told him how when the two of us were alone, I would read aloud to her and recite poetry.

It seemed to me then as if I had been

driven from a hiding-place. I could see my father looking at me in puzzlement, uncertain how to react to this strange event—that one of his children was to speak and the elders would listen. This was stranger than anything else Mr. Preston had brought into our world, and I began to exaggerate and define the embarrassment, impatience, and deprecation developing in my father's face.

I looked at my mother; she smiled and nodded, but I could see that she was as surprised as my father and almost as frightened as I. And in the background I felt my sister and my brothers as they moved about nervously and tittered in anticipation of the shame I would communicate to them.

I turned back to Mr. Preston, begging silently to be released. But he continued to command, not speaking, but only with his smile and the strength of his gaze, almost coldly, assuring me that a cowardly failure on my part would receive no comfort. The rigidity of his look gradually cleared the room of everyone but the two of us and, compelled, I began to quaver the first lines that came into my head: "Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art."

The choice was apparently inevitable, and as the first line came forth in my thin and frightened voice, Mr. Preston's face changed to seriousness and warmth. At the same time I heard a clap of hands and a "Ho!" from my father, as if he were overwhelmed with the surprise and relief of my beginning. But I fought the consciousness of his presence off, and I would not turn to look at him, or at anyone but Mr. Preston, to whom I seemed to owe some message. Absorbing his response, I gained a trance-like confidence and continued, finishing the rest of the sonnet with an emotion rendered intense by subsiding terror.

THE joy of reaching the last line flooded through me, and I felt that I had been set free, had broken a long silence, and the world had been found willing to listen.

Mr. Preston arose and almost embraced me with delight as he said, "That was wonderful, you sang it, you feel it!" We both turned toward my father as if to receive the final reward there. Mr. Preston began, "Well, what do you think—" and he stopped. My father was looking at us sullen and



jealous. All my pride and new strength broke before him.

I heard him say to my mother with a scorn he made no attempt to control, "What does it mean, do *you* understand?" As she, with determined pride, said, "No, but it is good," the old fury seemed to mount in him, and he said in Yiddish, "Strange words, a strange land, your own children come home strangers—"

My mother interrupted violently, "Where do you live, in Europe? Then go back! I don't have to understand. For my children that is good enough. Can they live our lives?"

My father's anger collapsed suddenly,

leaving him with a shrug and a beaten indifference.

For the first time since we had known him, Mr. Preston seemed disturbed and helpless before a mood he could not or did not want to relieve. My mother turned to him with attentions that tried to cover her shame. But he could draw on nothing more, and sat silent in a guilty embarrassment. Giving me a last commiserating look, he said, "Why don't you learn something for your father at Hebrew School?" and then he left for his dinner upstairs.

If I could speak to Mr. Preston now, I would say that agents of the inevitable have no guilt.

# CEDARS OF LEBANON

## THE JOURNEY TO ZION

### JEHUDA HALEVI

JEHUDA HALEVI, considered the greatest Hebrew poet between Biblical and modern times, was born in Toledo, Spain around 1085, gained his livelihood as a physician, wrote in both Hebrew and Arabic, and disappeared from recorded history some time after 1140, somewhere on the way from Egypt to Jerusalem.

Halevi wrote a famous philosophical dialogue in Arabic prose, *Kitab al-Kusari*, in which the speakers are a rabbi and the King of the Khazars, the nomad tribe in southern Russia that was converted to Judaism toward the end of the first millenium C.E. But his greatest accomplishment was to fit the recalcitrant Hebrew tongue into the complicated meters and rhyme-schemes of Arabic poetry and achieve thereby a rare fusion of elegance with fervor, force, and sublimity. Centuries later, Halevi's genius was

to become an object of admiration to two such disparate sensibilities as Herder and Heine.

The poems below—rendered into felicitous English by Nina Salaman, and appearing here by permission of the Jewish Publication Society, which in 1924 published them in a book along with other poems of Halevi's and their original Hebrew texts—all deal with the poet's almost nostalgic longing for Palestine and with his long and circuitous journey there. For Egypt, one notices, he has a special emotion: it is more than a halfway house, it is part and parcel of the *geste* that created Judaism; but it is only a foretaste, and Palestine alone is the fulfillment. Legend has it that when Halevi at last came to the walls of Jerusalem and knelt to pray and sing his *Ode to Zion*, a passing Arab horseman rode him down and killed him.—ED.

### Ode to Zion

Zion! wilt thou not ask if peace be with thy  
captives  
That seek thy peace—that are the remnant of  
thy flock?

From west and east, from north and south—  
the greeting  
"Peace" from far and near, take thou from  
every side;

And greeting from the captive of desire,  
giving his tears like dew  
Of Hermon, and longing to let them fall  
upon thine hills.

To wail for thine affliction I am like the  
jackals; but when I dream  
Of the return of thy captivity, I am a harp  
for thy songs.

My heart to Bethel and Peniel yearneth sore,

To Mahanaim and to all the places where  
thy pure ones have met.

There the Presence abideth in thee; yea,  
there thy Maker  
Opened thy gates to face the gates of heaven.

And the Lord's glory alone was thy light;  
No sun nor moon nor stars were luminants  
for thee.

I would choose for my soul to pour itself out  
within that place  
Where the spirit of God was outpoured upon  
thy chosen.

Thou art the house of royalty; thou art the  
throne of the Lord, and how  
Do slaves sit now upon thy princes' thrones?

Would I might be wandering in the places  
where  
God was revealed unto thy seers and mes-  
sengers.

O who will make me wings, that I may  
fly afar,  
And lay the ruins of my cleft heart among  
thy broken cliffs!

I would fall, with my face upon thine earth  
and take delight  
In thy stones and be tender to thy dust.

Yea, more, when standing by my fathers'  
tombs  
I would marvel, in Hebron, over the chosen  
of thy graves.

I would pass into thy forest and thy fruitful  
field, and stand  
Within thy Gilead, and wonder at thy  
mount beyond—

Mount Abarim, and Mount Hor, where are  
the twain  
Great lights—thy Luminaries, thy Teachers.

The life of souls is the air of thy land, and  
of pure myrrh  
The grains of thy dust, and honey from the  
comb thy rivers.

Sweet would it be unto my soul to walk  
naked and barefoot  
Upon the desolate ruins where thy holiest  
dwellings were;

In the place of thine Ark where it is hidden  
and in the place  
Of thy cherubim which abode in thine inner-  
most recesses.

I will cut off and cast away the splendor of  
my crown of locks, and curse the fate  
That desecrated in unclean land the heads  
that bore thy crown.

How shall it be sweet to me to eat and drink  
while I behold  
Dogs tearing at thy lions' whelps?

Or how can light of day be joyous to mine  
eyes while yet  
I see in ravens' beaks torn bodies of thine  
eagles?

O cup of sorrow! gently! hold a while!  
already

My loins are filled, yea, and my soul, with  
thy bitterness.

When I remember Oholah I drink thy fury,  
And I recall Oholibah, and drain thy dregs.

Zion! perfect in beauty! love and grace thou  
didst bind on to thee  
Of olden time; and still the souls of thy  
companions are bound up with thee.

It is they that rejoice at thy well-being, that  
are in pain  
Over thy desolation, and that weep over thy  
ruin—

They that, from the pit of the captive, pant  
toward thee, worshiping,  
Every one from his own place, toward thy  
gates;

The flocks of thy multitude, which were  
exiled and scattered  
From mount to hill, but have not forgotten  
thy fold;

Which grasp thy skirts and strengthen them-  
selves  
To go up and take hold of the boughs of  
thy palms.

Shinar and Pathros\*—were they equal unto  
thee in their greatness?  
Can they compare their vanity to thy Thum-  
min and thy Urim?

And with whom could they compare thine  
anointed Kings? and with whom  
Thy prophets? and with whom thy minis-  
trants and thy singers?

He will change, He will wholly sweep away  
all the realms of idols;  
Thy splendor is for ever, from age to age  
thy crown.

Thy God hath desired thee for a dwelling  
place; and happy is the man  
Whom He chooseth and bringeth near that  
he may rest within thy courts.

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\* Shinar refers to the moral and cultural achieve-  
ments of Baghdad, and Pathros to Byzantium, as  
representing Mohammedan and Christian world-  
might respectively.

Happy is he that waiteth, that cometh nigh  
and seeth the rising  
Of thy light, when on him thy dawn shall  
break—

That he may see the welfare of thy chosen,  
and rejoice  
In thy rejoicing, when thou turnest back  
unto thine olden youth.

### My Heart is in the East

My heart is in the East, and I in the utter-  
most West—  
How can I find savour in food? How shall  
it be sweet to me?  
How shall I render my vows and my bonds,  
while yet  
Zion lieth beneath the fetter of Edom, and  
I in Arab chains?  
A light thing would it seem to me to leave  
all the good things of Spain—  
Seeing how precious in mine eyes it is to  
behold the dust of the desolate sanc-  
tuary.

### For the Sake of the House of Our God

*The singer's reply to one who reproved him  
for his longing to go to the Land of Israel*

Thy words are compounded of sweet-smell-  
ing myrrh  
And gathered from the rock of the moun-  
tains of spice,  
And unto thee and the house of thy fathers  
belong precious virtues  
Whereunto praises fail to attain.

Thou comest to meet me with sweet  
speeches,  
But within them lie men in wait bearing  
swords—  
Words wherein stinging bees lurk,  
A honeycomb prickly with thorns.  
If the peace of Jerusalem is not to be sought  
While yet with the blind and the halt she  
is filled,  
For the sake of the House of our God let  
us seek  
Her peace, or for the sake of friends and of  
brothers;

And if it be according to your words, see,  
there is sin  
Upon all those who bend towards her and  
bow down,  
And sin upon those sires who dwelt in her  
as strangers,  
And purchased there vaults for their dead.  
And vain would be the deed of the fathers  
who were embalmed  
And their bodies sent to her earth—  
And they sighing for her sake  
Though the land was full of reprobates;  
And for naught would the fathers' altars  
have been built,  
And in vain their oblation offered there.

Is it well that the dead should be remem-  
bered,  
And the Ark and the Tablets forgotten?  
That we should seek out the place of the  
pit and the worm,  
And forsake the fount of life eternal?  
Have we any heritage save the sanctuaries  
of God?—  
Then how should we forget His holy  
Mount?

Have we either in the East or in the West  
A place of hope wherein we may trust,  
Except the land that is full of gates,  
Toward which the gates of Heaven are  
open—

Like Mount Sinai and Carmel and Bethel,  
And the houses of the prophets, the envoys,  
And the thrones of the priests of the Lord's  
throne,  
And the thrones of the kings, the anointed?  
Unto us, yea, and unto our children, hath  
He assigned her;  
And though wild beasts abide in her, and  
doleful creatures,  
Was it not so she was given of old to the  
fathers—  
All of her the heritage of thorns and thistles?  
But they walked through the length and the  
breadth of her  
As one walketh in an orchard among the  
green boughs,  
Though the came as strangers and so-  
journers, seeking  
But burial place and a lodging there, like  
wayfarers.  
And there they walked before the Lord  
And learnt the straight paths.  
And they said that here arise the shades



And those who lie under the bars of earth  
come forth,  
And that here the bodies rejoice,  
And the souls return to their rest.

See now, yea see, my friend, and understand  
And turn aside from the lure of thorns and  
snares,

And let not the wisdom of the Greeks be-  
guile thee,  
Which hath no fruit, but only flowers—  
Or her fruit is, that the earth was never  
outstretched

Nor the tents of the sky spread out,  
Nor was any beginning to all the work of  
creation

Nor will any end be to the renewal of the  
months.

Hark how the words of her wise are con-  
fused,

Built and plastered up on a vain unstable  
base;

And thou wilt come back with a heart  
stripped empty

And a mouth full of dross and weeds.

Wherefore, then, should I seek me out  
crooked ways,

And forsake the mother of paths?

### On the Sea

I cry to God with a melting heart and knees  
that smite together,

While anguish is in all loins,

On a day when the oarsmen are astounded  
at the deep,

When even the pilots find not their hands.  
How shall I be otherwise, since I, on a  
ship's deck,

Suspended between waters and heavens,  
Am dancing and tossed about?—But this is  
but a light thing,

If I may but hold the festal dance in the  
midst of thee, O Jerusalem!

### Glory Unto Egypt

Look on the cities and consider the villages  
Which Israel held in possession;

And give glory unto Egypt, and lighten

Thy steps; nay, tread thou not heavily

Upon the streets where the Divine Presence  
passed through

To seek the blood of the covenant upon the  
doorposts,

And the pillar of fire and the pillars of cloud,  
And the eyes of all watching them and be-  
holding!

From thence were hewn the masters of  
God's covenant,

And thence were carven the corner stones  
of the people of the Lord.

### On Eagles' Wings

*On the way from Egypt to Zion*

Can bodies of clay

Be prison-houses

For hearts bound fast

To eagles' wings—

For a man life-weary

Whose whole desire

Is to lay his face

In the chosen dust?

Yet he feared and trembled

With falling tears,

To cast Spain from him

And seek shores beyond;

To ride upon ships,

To tread through wastes,

Dens of lions,

Mountains of leopards—

But he rebuketh his dear ones

And chooseth exile,

Forsaketh shelter

And inhabiteth deserts,

While wolves of the forests

Find in his sight

The favour of maidens

In the sight of youths;

And ostriches please him

Like singers and players,

And the roaring of lions

Like the bleating of flocks;

And he setteth his delight

In the burnings of his bosom,

And the floods of his tears

Are like streams of the rivers.

He goeth up by the hills,

He goeth down by the valleys,

To perform oaths,

To fulfill vows;

He journeyeth, he wandereth,  
 He passeth by Egypt,  
 Toward the land of Canaan,  
 Toward the chosen of mountains.  
 The reproofs of his adversaries  
 Are renewed round about him,  
 But he heareth and is silent,  
 Like a man without words;  
 For how long should he strive with them  
 And how long refute them,  
 And why should he harass them,  
 Seeing they are drunken?  
 But how call him happy  
 In the bondage of kings,  
 Which is in his eyes  
 But a service of idols?  
 Were it well to be happy  
 For a man simple and upright,  
 Like a bird that is bound  
 In the hand of little boys—  
 In slavery to Philistines,  
 And Hagrites and Hittites,  
 Alluring his heart  
 With other gods  
 To seek their favor  
 And forsake God's will,  
 To betray the Creator  
 And serve His creatures?—  
 The face of the morning  
 Would be black to his eyes,  
 The cup of sweetness  
 Bitter to his mouth,  
 Wearied and toiling,  
 Oppressed and weak,  
 And longing for Carmel  
 And the City of the Forests,  
 To seek forgiveness  
 At the peaceful graves  
 Of the ark and the tablets  
 That are buried there.  
 I shall hope to pass thither,  
 I shall fall on their grave,  
 And mine eyes, at their ruin,  
 Shall break forth into torrents,  
 And all my thoughts  
 Trembling unto Sinai,  
 Mine heart and mine eyes  
 Unto Mount Abarim!  
 And how should I not weep  
 And pour forth tears,  
 And hope therefrom  
 The quickening of the dead?  
 Since there are the Cherubim

With the written tablets—  
 Among the earth clods,  
 In a place of secrets,  
 A place of wonders,  
 The fountain of prophecies—  
 Their faces glowing  
 With the glory of God!  
 I shall fondle its dust  
 I shall nestle beside it  
 And lament upon it  
 As over a grave—  
 And the goal of my thoughts  
 To make my couch  
 'Mid my fathers' graves  
 In the demesne of the pure.

Go up, O ship!  
 And seek the region  
 Which hath for the Shekhinah  
 Abodes within.  
 O hasten thy flight  
 And God's hand waft thee,  
 And bind thou thy wings  
 To the wings of the dawn—  
 For them that flee and wander  
 With the wind of the sails,  
 For the hearts that are torn  
 To a thousand shreds.  
 But I am in fear of  
 The iniquities of youth,  
 Those which are counted  
 In the scrolls of my God;  
 Yea, more, the iniquities  
 Of the days of age,  
 Changing ever,  
 Renewed every morning.  
 For there is no penitence  
 For wantonness—  
 And whither shall I go  
 Between the straits?  
 I imperil myself,  
 By forgetting my trespass,  
 Whilst my soul and my blood  
 Are delivered over to sin.  
 Yet trust may be drawn  
 From Him who is lavish of forgiveness,  
 And courage and strength  
 From the loosener of captives:  
 And should He judge and punish,  
 Award or deprive—  
 For good or for evil  
 His judgments are right.

# THE STUDY OF MAN

## CAN WE FIGHT PREJUDICE SCIENTIFICALLY?

### *Toward a Partnership of Action and Research*

SAMUEL H. FLOWERMAN and MARIE JAHODA

THE three-day Public Relations Workshop recently sponsored in New York by the American Council of Race Relations brought into sharp focus the quandary in which workers in the field of combating group prejudice find themselves today. Three groups were represented in the meetings: experts in the general field of public relations, including advertising, direct mail, film, radio, and press; professional workers on the staff of national and local agencies specifically concerned with fighting group discrimination; and social scientists from the universities and national defense agencies.

Here is the background of the dilemma as the Council sessions revealed it: aroused to the menace of race hatred, people of good will have joined with representatives of minority groups in a whole spate of activities, locally, nationally, and even internationally. Depending on the

time, the place, and the people, this activity ranges all the way from folk festivals and community sings to plastering the landscape with billboard posters. Prompting their work is the desire to "do good," to spread brotherhood and unity, to secure fair and just treatment for all men regardless of the color of their skins, countries of birth, or forms of worship. And permeating it is an unmistakable pressure of dread, an urgent sense of the need for immediate action against an enemy endangering the well-being and future of America.

But increasingly in recent months, uncertainty and self-questioning have begun to gnaw at their minds: are their feverish activities actually accomplishing the purpose of diminishing prejudice? Granted that these activities constitute a source of gratification and comfort, at least to the participants on the side of right. But that is not enough. When a good-will meeting is followed—as has happened more than once—by a school strike, a street-corner beating, a lynching, or the burning of a cross, then the clouds of doubt gather.

### Public Relations and the Social Scientist

THE core of the dilemma might be summarized as follows: should we act now, today, continuing to take on trust the efficacy of our methods? Or should we subject what we do to scientific analysis, even at the risk of slowing up the work? For haunting the conference was the feeling of many of the participants that many prevalent methods were proving ineffective, might even be doing as much harm as good. The problem was highlighted in the discussions of speakers of the most diverse backgrounds and in practically every subject area covered. More than once the issue was sharply joined. The workshop heard Henry Hoke, direct-mail authority and author of *It's a Secret*,

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advocate direct-mail advertising to "sell" everything from fish to good human relations, and it heard Drs. Bruno Bettelheim and Sol Ginsburg, after describing the psychological dynamics of prejudice, challenge such advertising approaches as superficial.

It is after all not surprising in our industrial-commercial culture that group-relations practitioners should resort to advertising techniques, that the methods used to boost the sales volume of famous-brand toothpastes or soaps should be taken out of their commercial context and used in the battle against prejudice. It is characteristic of human intelligence, and its limitations, that man uses modes of problem-solving he has learned in one situation to meet the demands and emergencies of new situations.

But the inadequacy of such habitual patterns of response is easily demonstrated. Take literally, for example, the very symbol which the activists-at-all-costs so often use in expressing the urgency of their fight against discrimination: putting out a fire. The age-old precept, water puts out fire, failed when used in the London blitz; the fire of oil and phosphorus bombs blazed anew when water was played on the flames. It took tragic experience to prove that not all fires can be fought with identical means.

The better way toward useful techniques would seem to be found in cooperation between those who act and those who do research. One approach in that direction was reported by Stuart Cook of the Commission on Community Interrelations, who made a case for the scientist doing his work while actually participating in community action.

However, the vague and undefined use during the meetings of such terms as "workshop," "public relations," and "community relations" is in itself a subtle sign that such cooperation between the practitioner and the social researcher is as yet in its infancy.

"Workshop" should mean not merely an aggregate of individuals who are exposed in common to lectures and discussions; such proceedings should more properly be called an "institute" or "conference" and, actually, the American Council's meetings were nearer these. The term "workshop" would have been more appropriate if it had been possible for the meetings' participants to live and work together, learning to speak the same language, and to use their emergent understanding and acceptance of each other for the solution of clearly recognized and mutually defined problems. Such a workshop would be a sign of an advanced state of cooperation between social scientists and practitioners. (Its vocabulary would probably have no term like "public re-

lations," with all its commercial connotations, using "community relations" instead.)

## How Many Do We Reach?

WHAT then emerged from the conference? Foremost, a healthy admission of the inadequacies in existing practice and research; and second, the beginning of the formulation of problems for combined operations.

The negative aspect of the first result makes it not a whit less important. Putting aside for the moment the question of the potential effectiveness of current public-relations techniques, those who use them (and most strongly believe in their efficacy) readily agree that they are neither exploiting all possible media of communication, nor reaching their proclaimed target-audiences. In a survey conducted by Arnold Rose (Bennington College), and reported by June Blythe of the American Council of Race Relations, it was shown that pro-democratic messages were being disseminated principally through pamphlets and public speakers. The press is used only intermittently, and films and radio only spasmodically. Radio appeals, even on the rare occasions of their use, too often take the form of unattractive speeches, forums, and spot announcements rather than dramatic presentations. About 90 per cent of all pro-democratic material is produced by the three largest organizations in the field of intergroup relations.

And who is reached by pamphleteering? Chiefly religious and educational leaders. Community groups, such as parent-teachers associations, are reached less often.

The survey showed that most pamphlets distributed contain rather broad general appeals that do not refer or apply to highly specific or local problems, and that the same appeals are monotonously used over and over again.

The use of speakers to address political organizations or other groups face to face on problems of group tension is rare. And veterans, foreign-language groups, and rural populations are hardly touched.

Finally, it was conceded that in turning out educational material, there was a marked lack of cooperation among producing organizations and, in consequence, material was sometimes conflicting, and very often certain segments of the population were reached over and over again, while other large segments were altogether untouched.

## Does Propaganda Work?

ABOUT these facts—and the need to improve distribution—there could be no argument; but



when the problem of the validity or appropriateness of public-relations approaches was raised, the issue between practitioners and social scientists was squarely joined. The consensus of the remarks of participating social scientists constituted a fundamental challenge to the practitioners: *How do you know that what you are doing—assuming you are doing it well—is effective?* Justifiably, this evoked from the practitioners a counter-challenge as to whether the social scientists had succeeded in developing techniques for reliably determining the effectiveness of *any* social action at all.

This challenge was taken up on two levels. Dr. Ginsburg, a practising psychiatrist who based his remarks on Freudian concepts, substantiated the social scientists' fundamental doubt about the effect of material distributed through mass-communications media. Citing examples from his analytical experience, he showed that prejudice is often so deeply embedded in crucial personality conflicts that nothing but the resolution of the conflicts themselves could possibly alter an attitude of prejudice.

In answer to the question: how can you measure the impact of any social action? the social scientists presented a variety of procedures which they believed could demonstrate the efficacy—or inefficacy—of public relations and other techniques. Arnold Rose summarized the work in this field, and speakers followed him with detailed discussions of public-opinion polls (Leo Crespi, Princeton University), propaganda-testing techniques (S. H. Flowerman), and the use of the program analyzer—a mechanism that enables individuals to record their flow of likes and dislikes during a film or broadcast (Hertha Herzog, radio research director of McCann-Erickson, Inc.).

It would appear that in their attempts to measure the effectiveness of social action—propaganda, for instance—some social scientists have at least caught up with common sense, and have perhaps even advanced beyond it. They have done so despite the peculiar position in which they find themselves, a position that makes difficult every step beyond common sense. (Of common sense, Abram Kardiner in the last issue of COMMENTARY said that it is a "supremely prejudiced and culturally conditioned implement that is standard equipment for every human being—an adaptive, not an analytical tool, and hence useless for searching out the sources of disruptive social tensions.") Both hampering and stimulating the social scientist is the fact that every man is his own social scientist; the matrix of social science is the stuff of everyday life experience. This

denies to the social scientist the position of authority enjoyed by the physical scientist. (Yet it is interesting to note that when refuting the social scientist, the practitioners oddly enough fell back on scientific arguments about the adequacy of the sample, the possibility of generalizing from experimental results, methodology, etc.) But on the other hand, every man's right to draw upon his own life experience serves to keep the social scientist out of the ivory tower.

The contemporary social scientist readily acknowledges that the nature of his findings does not constitute incontrovertible *proof*, but rather supporting or refuting *evidence* for a hypothesis. It is up to the practitioner, for his part, to accept the findings of the social scientist at least as evidence. Thus, when the scientist's results indicate that a certain appeal is likely to be misunderstood, this should carry greater weight than the "common sense" judgment of any single individual. Those who insist upon maintaining their rule-of-thumb practices until such time as the social scientist shall have furnished them with absolute and undeniable proof will wait in vain. We cannot expect ultimate proof even from physical scientists, toward whom we are more timid in making demands, largely because their theoretical domain is far removed from everyday life experience.

### Directives for Research

ONE of the constructive contributions of the conference was a realization that a more profitable undertaking for the practitioner than his defensive counter-attacks upon the reliability of the findings of social science is to make intelligent use of the researcher's cooperation by posing vital questions for research. To some extent, such new formulations were made by activists at the conference.

For example, what seemed to stir the practical worker most were findings on the genesis of prejudice and its meaning for the individual, as revealed by techniques of analysis in depth. Faced with a view that related prejudice to deep-rooted emotional conflicts, the practitioner felt his work more than ever challenged. At this point, research found itself in turn challenged by this fundamental question: how—and to what extent—can insights derived from psychological study of the *individual* be applied to techniques aimed at masses?

The social scientists' answer to this problem was tentative. Obviously, they put little stock in rational arguments alone to convert the prejudiced. However, war and postwar experience with methods of group therapy have

suggested possible ways to achieve for greater numbers, and in shorter time, what psychotherapy has done for individuals treated singly. Julius Schreiber of the National Institute of Social Relations described the group-discussion technique developed in the Army's wartime orientation program, and recommended its application on the community level to the problem of discrimination. Morris Janowitz (University of Chicago), also referring to Army experience, emphasized another aspect of the group-discussion technique: it inevitably means a decentralized and differentiated approach adapted to the specific experiences of group members rather than wholesale mass spraying, so to speak.

Even when the common mass media are used, setting up a group situation was advocated by Alice Keliher (New York University), who maintained that an educational film plus discussion was better than one without discussion; and that the showing of two films, even if one was "prejudiced," was better than the showing of just one film. The merit in attacking the prejudiced attitudes of individuals while they are together in groups in factory or office or at social affairs rather than in isolation is that this harnesses the powerful sanction of group approval or disapproval for changing attitudes. Obviously, this sanction cannot operate in quite the same way on a single individual reading a pamphlet or listening to the radio in privacy.

At the same time, the rational approach—directed toward the individual or the group—may not be without significance, it was suggested. To be sure, the intended targets for mass appeals are surely not those who have managed to escape the powerful psychological and cultural forces that produce prejudice in individuals. Yet those who are already on "our side" may gain from reasoned arguments more strength and new stimulation to hold steadfast in their position; they may even be impelled to undertake work toward influencing the prejudiced.

Here the question was raised as to whether such current appeals as "good will and understanding," "divide and conquer," "brotherhood and unity," "Americans all—immigrants all," etc., are really effective in producing the desired changes of heart. The very raising of this question implies a partly negative answer. It does not seem likely that such appeals will prove strong enough to overcome deep-rooted personality trends; yet for the man who is on our side, and for him who is still neutral, they may be useful. Whether or not spending much energy and money on the propagation of such appeals to those already converted is

justified, however, can only be decided after more study.

## Two Streams in Mass Media

EMOTIONAL conflicts in the individual are, however, not the only hindrance to success of propaganda for good human relations. There are those broad cultural trends—above and beyond the individual—which permeate the vast stream of mass communications—radio, press, mass-circulation magazines, movies—to which everybody is daily exposed. The combined activities of all good-will agencies contribute only a tiny fraction to this vast stream. Is it, therefore, not more important to study the main stream rather than its tributaries? Of what value, for instance, is a 16-mm. educational film designed to promote tolerance when a commercial film produced by Hollywood and seen by tens of millions of people can undo what little effect it may have had?

The same doubts were expressed in the field of radio. What good is it to laboriously develop a skillfully organized radio forum reaching only a small audience when such commercially-sponsored programs as "Can You Top This?" may that same evening be stamping into the minds of millions the negative stereotypes of minorities that the forum tries to erase?

This problem was raised by S. H. Flowerman, who suggested that if we could collect solid research evidence of the harm done by certain movies and radio programs, we could then bring pressure to bear upon producers. At least two other speakers dealt with this same problem by implication in discussing concepts and techniques appropriate for the study of the stream of mass communication. Paul Lazarsfeld of the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University introduced the notion of "social bookkeeping," a systematic service that would note and evaluate—in terms of its bias or lack of bias—any material appearing in mass media of communications. Joseph Goldsen (Nejelski Company) described the techniques of content-analysis (such as those used in the study of enemy propaganda) on which such "social bookkeeping" would have to be based.

However, no easy answer to this question seemed possible. Some thought that the quantitative aspect was not decisive: possibly the small contribution made by material directed against prejudice, just because it moves in a direction different from what the public is used to, may attract more than its proportionate share of attention.

Obviously, the relative impact of the two main streams—the great volume of implicitly

prejudiced mass-communications and the trickle of material explicitly directed against prejudice—needs to be investigated on a large scale.

### The Need for Coordination

AGAIN and again during the conferences, community and agency workers with neither the funds nor the facilities for research asked how the research techniques and findings of the social scientists might be made available for them. From this came a suggestion that had the whole-hearted support of most of the participants at the conference: the establishment of a central organization for research in the field of discrimination, which would start as an information center and which might develop into a coordinating body, directing the choice of subject matter in discrimination research. In this way, a solid structure of knowledge could be developed instead of a haphazard collection of data. In such a master plan, there would be a place for basic research as well as for evaluation of programmatic activities. And at the same time, the researcher could be closely acquainted—sometimes even directly associated—with the situations which confront the practitioner in his daily work, so that his studies could be geared to ultimate usefulness.

The conference's chief contributions were its sharpening of the dilemma in "public re-

lations," and providing the impetus and a possible blueprint for its resolution.

On the immediate practical side, the importance of evaluating and pre-testing propaganda method and material was forcefully brought out. As Alfred McClung Lee of Wayne University puts it: no modern industrial plant would consider going into production of a consumer commodity without first pre-testing the need for it and the public's response to it. Human-relations programs ought not to fall short of similar standards of efficiency.

For the social scientist, the conference broadened his perspective and his understanding of the community realities with which the practical worker must deal, and it opened up for him new avenues of research.

The need for coordination and cooperation among community practitioners and social scientists was dramatically shown. It became crystal clear that only through such joint work can action be undertaken that is not action for mere action's sake, but a decisive and tested step towards improving man's relations to man.

Indeed, the meeting itself may be considered a memorable demonstration of the high potential of a partnership between practitioners and social scientists, and the growing recognition of that fact by both.

# LETTERS FROM READERS

## I Wish They Wouldn't Do That

We have received a large number of letters discussing the article "I Wish They Wouldn't Do That!" which appeared in the October issue, and they continue to pour in as we go to press. We shall publish as many as we can in our next issue, and in the meantime are printing an article in rejoinder by Ralph E. Samuel (see page 522).—Ed.

## Darwin was the Betrayer

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Reading the first article in the September COMMENTARY ["This Century of Betrayal," by Hans Kohn] prompts me to offer a few remarks.

I wonder whether the 20th century has been a century of betrayal of human freedom. Were ever such large and heroic fights ever made before in history for human freedom?

This century has been reaping the consequences of a betrayal that took place in the 19th century. The German political militarists of the 19th century joined forces with Charles Darwin and the British biologists of that time to impose an unmoral program upon society. Nor were these biologists entirely naive about it. Quotations from Mr. Darwin's own pen could be multiplied to show that he himself was well aware of the consequences to society of what he was doing.

If belief in a creative God has anything to do with creative civilization, the English biologist by his own confession betrayed that civilization when he surrendered all reliance upon God. In one of his letters he wrote of his early conviction of God, and of how this conviction was strong in him about the time he wrote the *Origin of Species*, but that "since that time, it has gradually, with many fluctuations, become weaker . . . and I for one must be content to remain agnostic."

Darwin was a political philosopher who openly acknowledged his original inspiration as coming from the work of political philosophers. He thought that nature worked according to laws of society that some of the social philosophers had succeeded in making popular. He transferred these ideas to the realm of biol-

ogy. These invented laws were not humane in their operation. See Herbert Spencer.

Darwin was a racist. He thought that the mind of Greece and the power of Rome found meaning only in the coming of the Anglo-Saxon. He thought that the Caucasians had completely beaten the Turks in the "struggle for existence," although the struggle between the British and the Turks was in no sense a struggle for survival, but a struggle for economic ascendancy—not existence, but an abundant existence. He said that from the war of nature, famine, and death had come about the noblest of which we are capable—the development of higher animals. "Looking into the world," he wrote, "at no distant date, what an endless number of the lower races will have been eliminated by the higher civilized races of mankind."

So it became possible for Germans to say: "Hegel thought it, Darwin proved it." It was the 19th century that betrayed our human freedom: this century has fought to preserve it. The betrayal of yesterday opened the way for the crucifixion of today. This line of investigation might easily yield up something that would make the 19th century ashamed of itself, as Judas was, and something that would give us a large ground for pride in the century that is ours. I am beginning to think as I read the constant stream of critical abuse of this century that our magazines are pouring out that they could be in a much better and more encouraging business.

GEORGE H. PARKINSON

*The Christian Advocate*  
Chicago, Illinois

## Profiteering

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have rarely seen such organized misinformation and inaccuracies as appeared on page 347 of your October issue, in "The Month in History."

You refer to the "orgy of guaranteed profits" made by American capitalists during the war. You might refer to the prosaic facts.

According to figures of the government of the United States, compensation paid to em-



employees rose from 64.5 billion dollars in 1941 to 114.5 billion dollars in 1945. Meanwhile, dividends, which in 1941 amounted to 4.5 billion, dropped in 1942 and 1943 to 4.3 billion for each year. They rose in 1944 and again in 1945 to 4.5 billion. I fail to understand how anybody can construe this compensation to American capitalists in terms of an "orgy" of war profits.

JULIUS GRODINSKY

Wharton School of Finance and Commerce  
University of Pennsylvania.

#### TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Grodinsky quotes figures for dividends. I was talking about profits. They are not the same—every schoolboy knows that. But even in terms of dividends, he is deceptive. He begins with 1941, when profiteering was already in full swing. Why not begin with an earlier year, to demonstrate the rise? In 1939, dividends were 3.7 billion.

But, I repeat, I am talking about profits, not dividends, which are only part of profits. The most reliable estimates of profits are the figures for corporate earnings after payment of taxes. According to the Survey of Current Business for April, 1946, pages 13 and 15, published by the United States Department of Commerce, the figures are as follows: earnings after taxes in 1939 were 4.7 billion dollars; in 1940, 6.1 billions; in 1941 they reached 9.1 billion and have remained over 9 billion every year since. (Incidentally, earnings before taxes rose from 6.2 billion in 1939 to 17 billion in 1941, to 24.8 billion in 1943, and went down to 20.8 billion in 1945.)

I don't know why Mr. Grodinsky brings in the figures for employee compensation, unless it is to show how the coupon clippers suffered in sharp contrast to the workers. Since he mentions them, however, I must point out the deceptiveness of these figures, too.

Mr. Grodinsky leaves the unqualified, and erroneous, impression that the workers had money to burn. He does not point out (1) the increased number of workers among whom this increased compensation was spread, and (2) the higher number of hours the employees worked to earn it.

Apart from these considerations, the increase in compensation seemed to have little effect on profits. In 1941, when compensation to all employees was only 64.5 billion dollars, profits after taxes were already 9.1 billion, rose to nearly 10 billion in 1943, and were still over 9 billion in 1945, when employee compensation finally reached 114.5 billion.

SIDNEY HERTZBERG

New York City

## For the Record

#### TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Your "The Month of History" of November, treating the report of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, makes the following statement:

"The President had been able to control his overwhelming desire for the immigration of 100,000 Jews into Palestine when it involved support of the Anglo-American Committee recommendations or the federalization plan, both of which were opposed by Zionist extremists."

I underscore your use of the words "Zionist extremists." Your readers might assume from that, that there were organized forces in the Zionist movement that supported the Anglo-American Committee recommendations. Unless I am very much mistaken, only one Jewish organization in the United States came out in full support of all the recommendations of the Anglo-American Committee, to wit, the American Council for Judaism.

This is not without some public interest, since there is in some quarters a criticism of both the British government and the American government for their failure to approve at once the complete set of recommendations of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. Regrettably, these circles do not know that with a single exception, the American Council, no Jewish organizations came out in support of the full adoption of the report. To what extent this failure influenced the inaction by the American and British governments—or furnished them with justifications for that inaction—can only be conjectured. I think it reasonable to believe that the failure on the part of Jewish organizations was not without some effect.

SIDNEY WALLACH

New York City

## The Immigrant in American History

#### TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Dr. Saveth's article on "The Immigrant in American History," published in the August COMMENTARY, is like a breath of fresh air in a stifling room. This broader consideration of the subject has long been needed, and Dr. Saveth has laid solid groundwork for handling it with some relation to facts, as distinguished from filio-piety. I hope he will go on with such writing. Of course, a lot of historians will be disturbed by the idea of re-thinking their work, but never mind that.

CHARLES A. BEARD

P.S. I see here in this village the problem in miniature, for "we" are old-stock English, Irish, Poles, Negroes, Italians, Jews, Greeks, and may-

be Turks too. I can see the "leaven," whatever that is, at work before my eyes. Oh! I forgot, a few "Portugees."

New Milford, Connecticut

#### TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In substance I agree with Edward N. Saveth's article on "The Immigrant in American History," which appeared in the August COMMENTARY. Especially I share his feeling about Louis Adamic. But it is, I think, also well to remember that Louis Adamic expresses a sentiment which is by no means dead in post-immigrant communities, and that the disposition to call attention to eminent individuals is natural and inveterate. I think, too, that Dr. Saveth overestimates Oscar Handlin's paper, which is external and misses the trends toward effective political intelligence that appear spontaneously in immigrant communities. The fact is that one needs, in order to understand the dynamics of events, the disposition of a sympathetic novelist and the equipment of a cultural anthropologist.

I think Dr. Saveth's paper would have been helped if he had been able to speak about "filio-pietists" in terms of an empathy of the passion which drives them rather than the mere condemnation of their inadequacy. The changed climate of opinion in the social sciences of course envelopes the writing of history, too, and our present historic valuations are concurrent with the new atmospheres.

This does not mean that I don't think he is doing a very useful job in a neglected field, but I want to see him doing a better one. More power to him.

HORACE M. KALLEN

New School for Social Research  
New York City

### Program Notes

#### TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Kurt List's splendid article "Jewish Music on Records" in the September issue is a valuable guide for rabbis who are interested in this subject.

I was especially gratified at Mr. List's favorable reaction to the Jonah Binder album, "Sab-

bath Prayers," because I was present when the records were made.

These records were cut at the United States Naval Training Station at Sampson, New York in 1944. Jonah Binder was then a blue-jacket and his choir was made up of fifty young Jewish seamen. We had a complete turnover of choir personnel every eight weeks, as the men finished training and moved out to sea, but Jonah Binder stayed on. I was chaplain and he was my cantor and assistant, with a rating of Seaman 2/C, and later Specialist (W) 1/C. The choir was trained by Binder and sang twice every Friday night during two big services.

The day we received permission from the Navy Public Relations Department to make records, Binder rehearsed the choir hard for several hours, so when we went into the recording booth he was almost exhausted, and I can detect the weariness in his singing. Binder has a magnificent voice and deserves recognition for his inspiring contribution during the late war.

RABBI HENRY J. BERKOWITZ

Congregation Beth Israel  
Portland, Oregon

### About "Commentary"

#### TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have read COMMENTARY magazine since its first issue. I think it is one of the most promising journalistic ventures in America. It has maintained a remarkably high quality in dealing with all the more ultimate and immediate problems of our civilization. I think its contributions to an understanding of our most perplexing problems can be enormous.

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

Union Theological Seminary  
New York City

#### TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Your "COMMENTARY" is getting better and better. The November issue is surely a peach. As a Jew, I can't help being proud that *my brothers said that*. More power to you and your associates. God bless you all!

I. D. MINZBERG

Chattanooga, Tennessee

## BOOKS IN REVIEW

### Jews of the Ice Age

THIEVES IN THE NIGHT. BY ARTHUR KOESTLER. New York, Macmillan, 1946. 357 pp. \$2.75.

Reviewed by PHILIP RAHV

TAKEN as a piece of analytical reporting on Palestine and as comment on the fate of the Jews, Koestler's new book is significant and wonderfully readable. Taken as a novel, however, it is not good, and that for simple and even obvious reasons.

The truth is that Koestler has very little real feeling for existence as texture and pattern or for his characters as human beings over and above their assigned roles and settings. Hence as a literary artist he is able to create an air of reality but scarcely the conviction of it. It is mostly the historic *Zeitgeist*, rather than the irreducible data of the actual behind or beyond it, that engages his imagination. As a novelist he generalizes far more aptly—and with more speed and daring—than he is able to particularize, whereas the medium of fiction demands that an author earn the right to launch generalizations precisely through his capacity to back them up by means of particulars imaginatively conceived and so presented as to brace and enhance our sense of reality.

But is it really worthwhile to go on with this criticism of Koestler in order to demonstrate that he has no great standing as a practitioner of the art of fiction? The fact is that we do not read him for the sake of the specific pleasure that a fine novel gives us; we read his fiction for the same reasons that we read his non-fiction, since in his case the two forms are virtually interchangeable. It is easy enough to show that in this new novel not a few elements are handled with unartistic facility and basic negligence. Still, call it a novel or a report or a dramatized treatise, *Thieves in the Night* is, to my mind, the best book on the situation of the Jews in Palestine available in English. For Koestler has done what no other writer dealing with that situation has so far succeeded in doing: he has treated the theme of Palestine and the Jewish struggle for survival not as an isolated phenomenon, nor in a philanthropic or

goody-goody way, nor from the standpoint of the sectarian Jewish tradition, but as an integral part of the modern world-theme as a whole—the theme of life in “the political ice age,” *our* life with its vast, ferocious, and ambiguous social struggles, its unrestricted violence and despair, its betrayals and proscription of entire nations and societies. Thus this book engages our total attention, in the same considerable way that *Darkness at Noon* and *Arrival and Departure* did. It displays Koestler's typical virtues to good advantage: his lively temperament, his sense of irony and scepticism modulating the search for secure ideals, and above all his quality of relevance and awareness. It is for this last quality, particularly, that we like Koestler. In this period of the unmistakable loss of vitality in writing it is very rare.

Hence to say that Koestler is not a novelist to the manner born means less in this case than in the case of almost any other writer of fiction now held in popular esteem. Consider a writer like John Steinbeck, for instance. If one says of a novel by Steinbeck that it is without appreciable literary merit one is actually dismissing it *in toto*, for it certainly offers us nothing else by way of intelligence or relevant meaning. Most of our practising novelists are aware of the age only on a very low level, and their patterns of meaning are tissues of banalities because their power of consciousness is only slightly above that of the mass that reads them. If Koestler, on the other hand, is a novelist mainly of the *Zeitgeist*, he is at least responsive to its virulence and mindful of its mystifications; and he has developed a psycho-political style that supports his expression for it.

OF COURSE Koestler is neither a systematic nor a profound thinker. But that is hardly a crime, as some of our avant-garde and left-wing reviewers seem to think. To judge by the notices of *Thieves in the Night* that have appeared in some of the more advanced journals, these reviewers are bent on discrediting Koestler and dismantling his reputation. They continually over-react to him, as if they imagined that no writer so close to their own standpoint and basic concerns should be encouraged to function unless he sees things exactly the way they see them. His arguments and whatever answers he

gives to the questions that baffle us all they examine as if they were dealing with finished theoretical propositions. But Koestler is primarily a journalist, not a theoretician. His arguments are more empirical than rational. He is fond of epigrammatic formulations, romantic contrasts, and *coups de théâtre*. To be sure, in *Thieves in the Night* he has no more solved the Jewish problem (who has?) than he solved the problem of the relation between neurosis and revolutionary action in *Arrival and Departure*. What of it? After all, we look to Koestler for suggestive and pertinent comment, not for ultimate truths.

Also, it is necessary to correct certain misinterpretations of Koestler's attitude toward the Jewish terrorists in Palestine. In the *New Republic* Isaac Rosenfeld has accused him of making "a preferential selection of terrorist means," and, in effect, of accepting the very same "commisar-ethics" which he denounced in his previous books. Now this seems to me entirely unfair. As I read *Thieves in the Night*, Koestler defends the underground extremists on the ground that they are conducting an unavoidable and just war against the enemies of their people. The action of the novel takes place in 1937-39, when the underground was hitting the Arabs harder than it was hitting the British. Joseph, the hero of the novel, argues as follows: "The Arabs have been waging intermittent tribal war against us for the last three years; if we want to survive we have to retaliate according to their accepted rules. By throwing bombs into Arab markets the Bauman gang performs exactly the same inhuman military duty as the crew of a bomber plane. . . . To throw a handmade bomb in a crowded bazaar needs at least as much courage as to press a button opening a bomb-trap. And yet pilots are called heroes and the Bauman gang are called gangsters and terrorists and what have you." As for the British, long and painful experience has shown that they won't listen to persuasion alone. Bauman, the leader of the extremists, contends that if the Zionists are not to be crushed altogether they must treat the British in two ways: "One is persuasion. . . . Two is making a hell of a nuisance of ourselves. Driving each argument home with a bang. . . . A nation of conscientious objectors can't survive."

Now this position can be answered either pragmatically, as, for instance, that terror cannot possibly accomplish the Zionist aim because the combined force of the British and Arabs by far exceeds that of the Jews. Or it can be answered morally, from the point of view of the pacifist, who is against all violence and all war—even just wars. There are other answers, too,

but I cannot see where the charge of "commisar-ethics" and of imitating the fascists, no less, is anything but misleading.

Mr. Rosenfeld has confused terror as a tactic applied by the oppressed in their struggle against the oppressors (e.g., the Irish revolutionists, the Russian terrorists of the past century, the anarchists in several countries, and, more recently, the resistance movements in the Nazi-occupied territories) with terror as a system of government such as now prevails in the police-states of Stalin and Franco. But it is impermissible to forget that there is a world of difference between the violence of the underdogs, who fight for their rights no matter by what desperate means, and the violence of the top-dogs defending their status as a ruling elite. What is Joseph's basic motive in going over to the extremists? "I shall either get a stomach ulcer," he says to himself, "or join Bauman's gang. This is the real alternative. One can reach a point of humiliation where violence is the only outlet. If I can't bite, my wrath will bite into my bowels. That's why our whole race is ulcerated in the bloodiest literal sense. Fifteen hundred years of impotent anger has gnawed our intestines, sharpened our features and twisted down the corners of our lips."

There is only one passage in the book that might be cited in support of the charges against Koestler. When Joseph visits the hideout of the terrorists in Jerusalem he is disturbed by the atmosphere of mystic devotion, the arm-lifting salutes, the oaths of obedience, and the nationalist fanaticism. In the ensuing discussion with Bauman he speaks of his fears and doubts. Bauman's answer is that "it can't be done without the paraphernalia. That's the answer to your quibbling about our opera stuff. Our boys run greater risks than ordinary soldiers. If caught they are not treated as prisoners but tried as criminals. They need discipline; and there is no discipline without a ritual. . . . It is against reason that a man should walk into machine-gun fire because another man tells him to. But soldiering is based on the irrational assumption that he ought to do so. Therefore every army must have its tradition and its myth." Both Bauman and Joseph are Jewish nationalists *faute de mieux*, and Bauman's principal point is that while that sort of thing may be good enough for him, he cannot expect "his boys to die *faute de mieux*." Now it seems to me that Koestler, far from preaching a Machiavellian philosophy of politics, is in this passage simply stating the facts of the situation. It is a tragic recognition of the danger inherent in all political action, the danger of the means swallowing the ends. Still, Koestler commits himself to Jewish action in Palestine despite



his recognition of this danger. I, for one, would not take it upon myself to condemn him on that account.

As for the rest, Koestler differs from the Zionists in making it quite clear that the Arabs have a strong case in Palestine, which is not to be refuted by listing the benefits of Jewish colonization. But the Jews cannot afford the luxury of objectivity—"a race which remains objective when its life is at stake will lose it." It is the British who are mercilessly satirized in the book, for there is neither justice nor basic human need on their side.

Koestler, who is known as the spokesman of disillusioned socialists, is here for once in a position to report favorably on the results of a socialist experiment. Time and again he dwells on the contrast between the frightful results of Russian "socialism" and the achievements of the Jewish communities in Palestine—"In these hundred-odd settlements of ours we have been practicing pure rural communism for over thirty years, have survived all trials without sacrificing a single basic principle, and have transformed a seemingly utopian idea into a small-scale but significant working concern." Of course, there can be no real comparison between socialism in Russia and in Palestine, if only for the reason that in the latter country the socialists have never been exposed to the temptations bred by the possession of political power. The Jewish communes are nothing more than oases in an area dominated by imperialism. Nevertheless, one cannot but agree with Koestler that this experiment has proven that "under certain conditions a different form of human life could be attained" and that again was "as much as one could hope for."

Throughout this novel author and hero are closely identified. The fact that Joseph is half-Jewish and half-English can be taken as symbolic of Koestler's own estrangement from the Jews, his inner distance from them, and his sense of guilt and inferiority in relation to the greater Gentile world. "Since the days of the prophets," he writes, "self-hatred has been the Jewish form of patriotism." This, of course, is nothing new, though it has seldom been expressed so openly; and the melodrama of the formulation should not deter us from recognizing its basic truth. There is no need to analyze this feeling of self-hatred psychologically, for that has been done time and again and nothing has come of it. For the Jewish intellectuals in America the danger lies in their tendency to admit this feeling, not in order to enter upon a course of action that commits them more deeply to their own Jewishness, thus releasing them of its guilt and strain, but only in order

to make themselves appear more interesting, that is to say, more neurotically complicated and therefore deserving of greater consideration. It is plain that this can only lead to more self-assertiveness of the wrong sort and, in the end, to more self-hatred. No, consciousness, meditation, self-analysis are not enough. The real issue is a political one, and that is the way Koestler approaches it. It is political in the sense that it compels us to ask this question: is it possible for the Jews to convert their self-hatred into a positive force for their own reconstruction? It is hatred of the sickness of his own people that turned the poet Stern into a gunman-messiah. Other Jewish poets and thinkers have followed the path of unconditional idealism and of submission to fate. Koestler is not squeamish. He admires the Jews who have tried to master their fate much more than he can ever admire those who submit to it. That is the deeper meaning of his sympathy with the Jewish terrorists in Palestine.

### Changing Fashions in Patriotism

THE ROOTS OF AMERICAN LOYALTY. By MERLE CURTI. New York, Columbia University Press, 1946. 267 pp. \$3.00.

Reviewed by EDWARD N. SAVETH

MOST historians of American thought are confronted with at least two possible approaches to their themes: they can concentrate upon the idea in its relationship to the individuals expressing it, with particular stress upon the motivations involved; or else they can center upon the ebb and flow of ideas in a broad historical panorama. Professor Curti has adopted the latter approach as the most practical for his particular task, and has based his account of the historical evolution of American loyalty "on an extensive investigation of materials, published and unpublished, letters, files of newspapers and periodicals, government documents, Fourth of July orations, and fugitive pieces, on *belles lettres*, on works of art, and on the few secondary reports on American patriotism."

On the other hand, such an approach tells us very little about what motivates patriots. Professor Curti, absorbed as he is in the exposition of numerous conceptions of American patriotism, is somewhat reluctant to actually analyze his theme. He does not argue a thesis as did Beard in *The Idea of National Interest*. But this does not mean that Professor Curti is uncritical. He is aware of the uses to which patriotism has been put by predatory interests; disagrees with the conventional Marxist ap-

proach to nationalism as an oversimplified interpretation of a highly pervasive influence; stresses that the symbols of patriotism mean one thing to the privileged and another to the underprivileged. However, roots of American loyalty run deeper than the layers of top soil that Professor Curti himself reveals. They lie imbedded in individual personalities, and to unearth them would require a more extended biographical approach. What are the "roots" of American loyalty, what the key conceptions that for generations have inspired Americans to love of country, to take pride in it, and to make sacrifices for it? These "roots" are both constant and changing. Enduring in the sense that "the so-called instinctive basis of patriotism; its religious foundations and associations; the invitation to loyalty implicit in the economic resources, strength, and unity of the nation; the awareness of a unique geography and people, of a unique past and a unique future—" all of these are operative in the present as they were in the past.

There are, however, fashions in patriotism that have altered with the character of American thinking. The impact of the ideas of Hegel, Spencer, and Freeman upon post-Civil War America fostered the growth of the organic conception of the state which, in turn, was basic to an integral type of nationalism that threatened to displace the older, humanitarian variety. But whereas this newer conception of the state as a symbol of American loyalty was exploited for reactionary and predatory aims, there was a parallel tendency among liberal thinkers to advance a more humane interpretation of the meaning of America. Whitman and Lowell, among others, not only denied the claim of integral nationalists that the aims of the organic state transcended those of the individuals who composed it, but unqualifiedly affirmed the older and more liberal doctrine that men possess natural rights and that the nation is only a convenient instrument for the realization of these rights. Additional criticisms of the theory of integral nationalism were made by Josiah Royce, Mary P. Follett, and John Dewey, all of whom stressed the role of local and regional loyalties in developing national feeling of human value. These writers, and to their number might be added Horace Kallen, Julius Drachler, and Randolph Bourne, were perturbed by the standardization of modern civilization and looked hopefully to the local color of the region or the culture of the ethnic group to counteract the tendency toward uniformity implicit in integral nationalism.

The Marxist Left delivered a devastating critique of American national feeling, condemn-

ing it as a capitalist instrument binding the masses to the naked reality of the class struggle. Veblen wrote of patriotism as serving predatory capital by providing it with "an over-all sanction and ideal to enlist the common people in its competitions with foreign industry and trade." This indictment of American nationalism, however, was not popular with the working class. According to Professor Curti, the programs of liberal organizations such as the Populists, Single Taxers, the American Federation of Labor, all of whom made the traditional connection between patriotism and human well-being, appealed to American workers more than the negative attitude of the socialists.

Professor Curti also notes the tendency among New England scholars of the mid-19th century to claim a heritage from the Goths. But he fails to note the parallel trend to reject Anglo-Saxon Goths in favor of Norman Goths, or account for the fact that several decades later this trend was reversed and historians like John Fiske were willing to ascribe the sources of sectional and national greatness to their Anglo-Saxon heritage, and were either apologetic or forgetful about their Norman forbears.

Discussing the organic theory of the state, Professor Curti might well have afforded greater consideration to the major work of John W. Burgess. And writing of Woodrow Wilson's humanitarian nationalism, he might well have pointed out that Wilson, early in his career, associated national well-being with the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon in America; that his later conception of America as a composite nation was in some measure a matter of political expediency. And dealing with the symbols and touchstones of American national feeling, the author perhaps underestimates the popularity of the melting-pot symbol. One aspect of his theme left almost entirely unexplored is the fascinating phenomenon of expatriation. A study of our more prominent expatriates should reveal an interesting, if negative, side of American patriotism.

There are many other points at which the present study could be amplified. This is inevitable in so slender a volume that tells so long a story; and understandable when we realize that Joseph Dorfman in tracing the history of American economic thought merely to the Civil War period consumed two volumes, each twice the size, and more, of Professor Curti's slender monograph. Curti has drawn bold, accurate, and well-proportioned strokes across a broad, historical canvas. In so doing he was bound to miss some details of the story, but this is understandable in view of the substantial achievement of his book.

## Continent in the Sky

ISLAND IN THE ATLANTIC. BY WALDO FRANK. New York, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946. 503 pp. \$3.00.

Reviewed by HAROLD ROSENBERG

ONCE again, Mr. Frank is rediscovering America, this time in the life story of a middle-class New Yorker of Jewish descent who might well have been the author's father. The novel of Jonathan Hartt begins with the Draft Riots of the Civil War and carries us to the sinking of the *Titanic* near the beginning of World War I. During those fifty years, modern America came into being and set itself upon its course. And it is about this being and this course that Mr. Frank is immeasurably anxious. What fullness of life has America created? In *The Re-Discovery of America* (1929), Mr. Frank felt that there was still a promise. *Island in the Atlantic* seems to close the books—though, of course, life goes on.

From the start of their building of industrial America, Mr. Frank finds, Americans were discontented to the point of despair and violence. Once, however, there was hope even in the violence, but nothing came out of this great vexation of spirit but "a mean world . . . without love, without light." The characters in *Island in the Atlantic* are therefore all failures—except for a background figure or two that tends to speak in dialect—who fall short of reaching each other in love or, worse, are tangled together as mutual tormentors. The streets and houses of New York, which they created and which created them, are cold and repellent, and "dwarfed and made men alien." The cynical manipulators succeeded in ruling the country, and the man of ideals could not even retain his own integrity.

Yet Mr. Frank's novel is no savage attack on America's immediate past. Its mood is rather one of unfulfilled yearning. Even with his hope gone, Jonathan Hartt never entirely loses his semi-mystical chauvinism. And the nausea aroused in him by the American scene, though it becomes the persistent quality of his life, is decidedly lacking in purity. Like Mr. Frank himself—who has preached Method in creating and writes without any, who attacks the personal ego while cosmically suffusing his pages with everything he has thought, felt, or read—Jonathan refuses to stand firmly on the implications of his own judgments. He will not play the game of the Empire Builders to the extent of joining them in their work of power and destruction. Yet he is never tempted to reject them utterly and become a Thoreau or

a Wobbly. He builds himself a successful law practice and takes out his distaste for the representatives of the Big Money by serving on civic and grievance committees, and by being disagreeable to the Little Money paint and button manufacturers from whom he earns enough to live elegantly on Riverside Drive. In short, Mr. Frank's protagonist is a divided middle-class Man of Conscience, whose sacrifices are always weighed to see if he can afford them, and who is therefore subject at all times to the suspicion that his idealism and his principles are but a technique of the timid for establishing superiority over his neighbors.

ONE cannot question the accuracy of Mr. Frank's portrayal of the inner and outer life of this gentleman. It covers the conventional stages of boyhood, career-making, courtship and marriage, success and its moral issues, ripening and resignation. It touches upon Jonathan's Jewishness to the exact degree that it had reality for him: the recollection of a gentle father who used to quote the Old Testament and who seemed to find there an answer to the question of life's meaning that made Jonathan so uneasy; though, of course, the magic of that answer no longer worked, any more than did Pascal's or Lao Tse's. Beyond this, the Jews were evidently not a factor in the New York of Jonathan Hartt—no religious practice, no Jewish community, no flood of immigrants. Near the end of the book, a niece of Jonathan becomes a Zionist and changes her name from Belinda to Hadassah; what this means it's hard to say.

The element of self-destructive American violence from which Jonathan is in permanent recoil is personified in his friend Evan Cleeve, doomed son of a typical tycoon. Mr. Frank plays a heavy spray of mystification over this relationship, but it seems not extraordinary that the best friend of a Jonathan Hartt should be a wild gey like Cleeve and that this should puzzle him all his life. Nor has Mr. Frank failed to collect a good deal of data on the life of the times and on the physical surfaces of neighborhoods of 19th-century New York—its restaurants, park statuary, theater performances—so as to provide plausible references for his conversations, holiday excursions, domestic events.

Yet *Island in the Atlantic* is not a period or historical novel in the ordinary sense. Though it starts from the external, Mr. Frank's writing preserves but little of the reality of appearances or historical developments. His characters keep swallowing up their surroundings in their feelings and thoughts about them. The details of time and place are absorbed in



descriptions of moods which his persons would have experienced anywhere and at any time. "A train casting cindery sparks shattered overhead, and Jonathan felt the lesion of his world; the fine words, the noble laws, and this avenue rotten ere half ripe. Now the lesion was in him!" (For some reason, the word "lesion" both as a noun and as a verb (!) seems a favorite of Mr. Frank.)

It is plain then that Mr. Frank is concerned essentially only with subjective states. But he insists on thinking of them in terms of history and landscape. Perhaps this externalization of feeling is the perfect recipe for confusion. By this process, the meaning of a personal passion is not found in the feeling itself or in its object, but is spread out to define the world. While on the other hand, the world—in this case "America"—is worried like a piece of prey to yield up an emotional satisfaction to which its existence is irrelevant.

Why should America be looked to for individual spiritual salvation? Or for the ability to love a woman? And be condemned for not supplying it! What sort of conception of life holds one's country to be the sum of life's meaning and the source of personal inspiration, erotic potency, and faith? I used the term "semi-mystical chauvinism" above. Isn't Waldo Frank's America a false Whole, a projected Person, a fetish that fails? Surely the modern United States is not a primitive community in which all individuals are at one in their motions with the social unit, like a school of fish. There are many different movements and many different qualities of existence in the sum of American life. *Island in the Atlantic* is too "religious," in the sense of seeing life as totally dependent on a single external image, to be a realistic novel of American capitalism and the struggles that take place in it—though it seems to reflect feelingly the pain of existence that constitutes the texture of a certain kind of middle-class social idealism.

### Our Biblical Ancestors

LIGHT FROM THE ANCIENT PAST: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF THE HEBREW-CHRISTIAN RELIGION. BY JACK FINEGAN. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1946. 500 pp. \$5.00.

Reviewed by THEODOR H. GASTER

DURING the past twenty-five years, archaeological excavations in the Near East have revolutionized our entire conception of ancient history and of the milieu out of which Israel

and the Bible issued. For Jews, this new knowledge is of more than academic interest, for it provides a criterion—albeit as yet imperfect—whereby their true, or probable, early history may be distinguished from that fanciful embellishment of it which, in the manner of all folk traditions, forms the basis of their religious beliefs. Religion, to be sure, is in no way affected by a demonstration of the obvious truth that it is based more on subjective constructions of facts than upon the facts themselves. History, however, and historical perspective, can only stand to gain by a distinction between assured data and imaginative fancy.

The object of the volume here under review is to present a synthesis of the new knowledge. The first part of the book is devoted to a survey of excavations in the Near East and to accounts of what has been recovered (especially in recent years) of Sumerian, Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Hittite, and Canaanite civilizations. The Obeid, Uruk, Jemdet Nasr, and Mari cultures are passed in review against a broad historical background, and this is followed by a rapid sketch of Egyptian history, divided into the periods of Predynastic, Protodynastic, Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, and New Kingdom. The narrative then passes to Palestine and Syria, describing recent finds at such sites as Jericho, Megiddo, Beth-Shean, Lachish, Gezer, Ezion-Geber, Jerusalem, and Ras Shamra. After this come similar accounts of the Assyrian, Kassite, Hittite, and Persian Empires. The second part of the book discusses the new light upon Christian origins, with special emphasis on the discovery of ancient Biblical papyri and of early catacombs and churches. The work is illustrated by over two hundred excellent photographs and by a series of exceptionally clear maps. It is also fully indexed.

DR. FINEGAN's book is at once good and bad. Its good points are its happy summarizations of archaeological results in the field, where complicated questions of stratification, topography, ceramic styles, and datings and the like are presented in lucid, non-technical language such as a layman can readily understand. Commendable, too, is the author's habit of quoting frequently from ancient documents, and always in the best available translations, while the meticulous care with which he invariably cites sources and recent literature may well serve as a model to other writers. The bad points, however, cannot be ignored, more especially since they seem to proceed from fundamental errors of approach.

In the first place, there is the question of



*direction.* This book purports to deal with the archaeological backgrounds of the Hebrew-Christian religion. Actually, however, it does little of the kind. What it does is to assemble, not without skill, a great mass of information relating to the archaeology of what are commonly called Biblical lands, but at least 60 per cent of this information has no bearing whatever on the history of "the Hebrew-Christian religion." The account, for instance, of pottery patterns in predynastic Sumeria, or the brief summary of what is known about the Kassites, or, indeed, much of what is here written concerning the Egyptian and Assyrian empires, while it may be of importance in illustrating the cultural antecedents of the Biblical milieu, is completely irrelevant to a discussion of Hebrew religion.

On the other hand, most of what archaeology really has to say about Hebrew religious institutions and usages is passed over in silence. Some points which immediately suggest themselves are: the relation of the Israelitic to the earlier Canaanite system of sacrifices; the indebtedness of Old Testament poets to Canaanite mythology; the parallels, in both Sumerian and Hittite cultus, to the Israelitic rite of the scapegoat; the relation of the Jewish to the Babylonian calendar; the development of Hebrew psalmody as illustrated by Babylonian parallels and by the patterns of Canaanite verse; the new light on the architecture of temples and sanctuaries in relation to cosmic patterns; the divinity of kings and the evolution of the Messianic concept; the evidence of "holy Trinities" in Semitic religion; and the rise of monotheism. All of these issues are ignored in the present work, yet it is apparent that all of them have a place in a discussion of Hebrew religious origins, and in respect to all of them, archaeology has, indeed, material to contribute. It would seem, indeed, that the author has not sufficiently distinguished between Biblical archaeology as a whole and that part of it which bears upon the development of the Hebrew and Christian religions.

Secondly, Dr. Finegan seems—at least to this reviewer—too often to fail to see the wood for the trees. He is so obviously preoccupied with archaeology (in the narrower sense of excavations) as to overlook history. Out of the mass of his data it is difficult to construct any comprehensive picture of Sumerian, Babylonian, or even Hebrew, culture. While, for example, the main facts of Assyrian archaeology are correctly described, no picture emerges of what kind of life the Assyrians actually lived or what manner of beliefs they entertained; and it is surely in this direction, rather than in that of formal dynastic records or accounts

of excavations, that information should be sought regarding their influence on the development of the Hebrew-Christian religion.

Lastly, it is to be feared that the author's sins of omission are at times aggravated by sins of commission. While passing over most of what is really relevant to his theme, his anxiety to achieve complete coverage of the ancient civilizations of the Near East sometimes leads him to present such material as he offers in a somewhat skimpy and superficial manner. A case in point is his treatment of the Hittites. Actually, there was no reason at all for introducing them, since the author has not a word to say about their religion or its possible affinities with that of the Hebrews. But since he *does* introduce them, they should surely not have been dismissed in two pages! And the reader should surely have been informed that the term "Hittite" is applied today to two distinct civilizations, the one represented by the documents written in cuneiform, and the other, mainly of later date, by monuments in the yet imperfectly deciphered hieroglyphic script.

Similarly, in a work which purports to deal with the background of Hebrew religion, more attention might well have been paid to the Horites (Hurrians) who are now emerging as one of the major cultural elements of Palestine and Syria during the latter half of the second millennium B.C.E. Sometimes, too, the information given is not entirely up to date; the summary of the important Canaanite texts from Ras Shamra, for example, is derived from sources already antiquated; while the use of Mercer's edition of the Tell el Amarna letters reflects perhaps a less than fortunate choice.

Faults of perspective and orientation, however, should not be allowed to obscure the fact that, within its own compass and limits, this is a by no means unacceptable introduction to the archaeology of Biblical lands. It is a pity only that its subtitle is so misleading.

### By Sabbath Candlelight

BURNING LIGHTS. BY BELLA CHAGALL.  
With thirty-six drawings by MARC CHAGALL. New York, Schocken Books, 1946. 268 pp. \$3.00.

Reviewed by J. AYALTI

RAISED as a child in White Russia, in a patriarchal Hasidic home, where the light of the Friday candles with their appropriate prayers wandered the whole week between the walls and waited for a new Sabbath—where the

weekdays of the year were only bridges between the different holidays—little Bashke leaves the house of her father, studies Russian at a high school and at the Moscow University, writes her thesis on “the liberation of the Russian peasants” and about Dostoevski, and then proceeds to the miraculous, brilliant cities of the West. Her husband, Marc Chagall, climbs the ladder of fame, and she—now Bella—shares in his glory (because, as is well known, when the husband gets a chair in Paradise his wife receives a stool at his feet). Bella becomes acquainted with the “great” of her epoch. Days of *vernissages* and of critics’ praise, prizes and pictures sold to museums—all the fumes of fame and glory surround her.

The images of childhood retreated into the subconscious. And yet Chagall’s home was never estranged from its Eastern Jewish origins: on the walls of his studio there breathed the types of the old home, the symbolic paupers flying over housetops, the small-town musicians ascending to heaven together with their melodies, the bearded Hasidim dancing in honor of the Torah or of newlyweds. . . . But all this took place exclusively in the realm of art.

After seventeen years in France, Bella Chagall began to describe her youth. She wrote her book in 1939 on the eve of the Second World War. Was it a presentiment of her own death, which came suddenly a few years later? And did she want her own chair in the paradise of art?

WE find very little personal experience in *Burning Lights*. The ego of the author is dissolved in the general atmosphere of a life conducted according to fixed Jewish customs. She sees her childhood swathed in the hot steam of Turkish baths and the heavy fumes of Yom Kippur candles, permeated by the odors of Sukkoth-*etrogim* and Hanukah *latkes*, accompanied by the music of the Purim players and Simhath Torah dances. All this is perceived by the mind of a small child, but the child herself does not emerge as an individual. There is scarcely an episode in the whole book that could not have taken place just as well in any other of thousands of Jewish homes. But perhaps the author is not to blame for this lack of individuality.

The classic Yiddish writer Mendeley Mocher Sforim wrote about his 19th-century contemporaries: and what a strange people they were! Friday night, wherever they happened to be, they all ate mashed carrots; Saturday after praying they all ate *cholnt* cooked for eighteen hours, and then indulged themselves in a good bout of sleeping, after which they listened to a preacher’s sermon. . . . Since then,

much had changed. But Bella Chagall’s childhood remained within the confines of the old all-embracing customs and traditions. It is a picture of these that her book reveals.

The same thing, more or less, has been done during the last eighty years by almost every Yiddish and Hebrew writer. But the better of them have used this raw material primarily as background, and have not dwelt on it sheerly for its own sake, as Bella Chagall does.

Some critics saw something miraculous in the fact that an “assimilated” Jewish woman, who had written about the “liberation of the Russian peasant” and had frequented the exalted cultural milieus of the West, should all of a sudden sit down to write in Yiddish about Sabbath and the holidays in the old country. Some romantic people may even see in this the finger of God and another proof of the eternity of Israel. But theirs would certainly not be a literary point of view.

Reading the book, one is impressed by its all-pervading anguish and its nostalgia for the old world—emotions that do not get lost in the English translation. The descriptions are picturesque. Streets and houses, animals and inanimate objects, take on soul and personality. This old world is seen not only through the eyes of little Bashke, but also through those of the wife of a great painter. Marc Chagall’s drawings, which accompany the text, evoke the spirit of the epoch in a few strokes.

This book will perhaps be more accessible to average American readers wishing to get acquainted with the old world than are the Yiddish classics, for it is written by someone who also belonged to their world. And its individual chapters would certainly make appropriate reading for the younger generation on the Jewish holidays.

### Limits of Common Sense

YEARS OF WRATH: A CARTOON HISTORY: 1931-1945. By DAVID LOW. With a Chronology and Text by QUINCY HOWE. New York, Simon and Schuster, 1946. 320 pp. \$3.75.

Reviewed by CLEMENT GREENBERG

THE success of Low’s cartoons with the newspaper public would suggest that that public is more sensitive to art for its own sake than its members themselves realize.

Despite the claims made on the jacket of this latest collection of his cartoons—to the effect that Low “combines technical mastery of his medium with a political intelligence that

puts many of our contemporary statesmen to shame"—his insight into world affairs turns out to be only what might have been expected from any liberal with decent instincts and a large endowment of common-sense humor. Low has never, in reality, seen beyond the headlines, and his penetration of events is rarely superior to that of his readers. Altogether without any positive political ideas, and equally devoid of political imagination, he has manifested political intelligence only by being more afraid of fascism than Stanley Baldwin and Chamberlain were.

In my opinion the attraction of Low's cartoons consists in some part in the vividness with which they mirror, to the mind raised on Anglo-Saxon common-sense liberalism, the exact quality of its own attempts to make sense out of contemporary history. But I doubt whether this reflection of futility would have gone down so smoothly with newspaper readers had it not been embodied in, and thus transcended by, art. For Low is at least a remarkable draughtsman, a worthy continuator of the great but still largely unrecognized 19th-century English tradition of popular graphic art.

Examine almost any one of his cartoons and you will see how little its effect depends on its "idea" and how much on the drawing and design. Franco, at the end of the war, trying to buy a ticket for the "Victory bus" from a ticket-seller who happens to be Stalin; Franco carrying a stick of confetti labelled "War on Japan (perhaps)" and a tag on his cap saying "Hooray for Liberty"—anybody could have thought of that. What is funny and even illuminating in an inexplicable way is the frowzy, wistful, pint-sized figure of Franco (in 1937 Low drew him much larger) standing in his silly uniform in the gray penumbra of the left foreground, while in the blank white background anonymous civilians crowd aboard a bus. Linear definition, composition, and the

distribution of darks and lights drive home something that is more satisfying to the emotional requirements of the occasion than any possible real insight could be. Like every first-rate journalist, Low provides us with a proper state of mind, not with truth or information; and in the day-to-day struggle, the right emotion is a more urgent necessity to the newspaper reader than right understanding.

Since the beginning, Low's art has developed steadily toward greater crispness, economy, and broad, dramatic effect. In the early 30's there was still something about it of the jiggly-jerkiness of British bourgeois cartooning in its post-Edwardian decline. That style had a tendency to bog down in the narrative detail and in human-all-too-human sentiment. Low escaped from it quickly, but retained its concern for the likeness, and for that which is instantaneously, incandescently characteristic. By 1931 his squat little Japanese soldiers are depicted with such an infallible eye for the right detail, whether of anatomy or uniform, that they become more Japanese and more soldier than the reality itself.

In dealing with public personalities, Low is usually most telling when they happen to be British—naturally he understands his own kind best. Now and then, however, he manages to nail Roosevelt, Goebbels, Mussolini. And he always gets those he can see around and behind—Franco, for instance, or any other small, shabby potentate. But he is completely taken in by the fellow-travelers' version of Stalin as a benign tomcat; and while he can get the Germans and the German situation, he is incapable of seeing Hitler as anything more than a popinjay, a mincing hotel clerk. Perhaps it is too much to ask of common sense that it comprehend the lumpy, fermented, "souful" vulgarity which seems to have been the Fuehrer's most personal and most German quality. And perhaps the failure to get Hitler marks the limit of Low's talent. After all, he is no Daumier.

### BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

PHILIP RAHV is an editor of the literary magazine *Partisan Review*. He edited the recently published collection, *The Short Novels of Tolstoy*.

EDWARD N. SAVETH formerly taught history at the College of the City of New York. He is now on the staff of the American Jewish Committee.

HAROLD ROSENBERG, poet and critic, has had

one volume of poetry published—*Trance Above the Streets*.

THEODOR H. GASTER is chief of the Semitic Section of the Library of Congress.

J. AYALTI is a Yiddish journalist and writer. His story "The Presence is in Exile, Too," appeared in the September COMMENTARY.

CLEMENT GREENBERG, associate editor of COMMENTARY, is art critic of the *Nation*.

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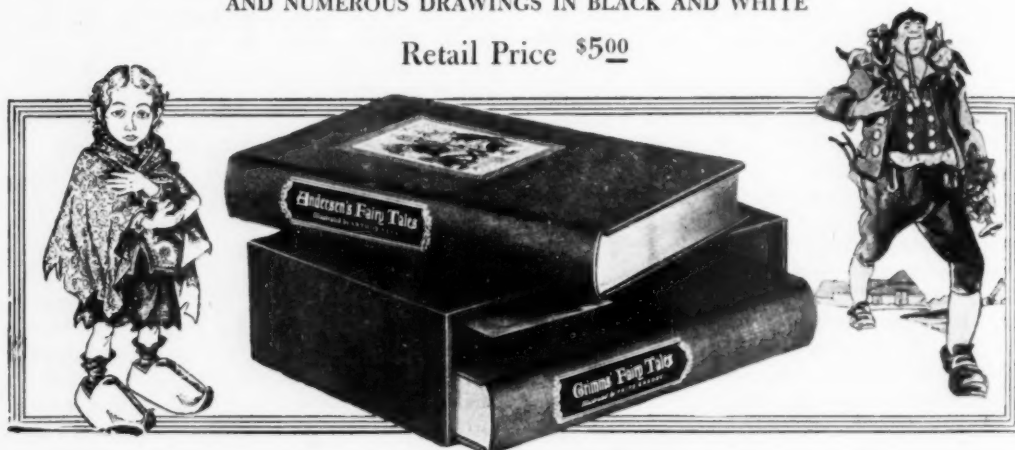
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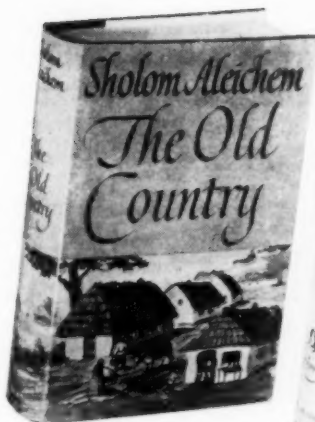
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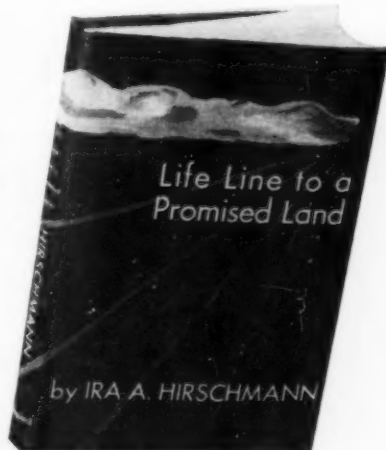
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By IRA A. HIRSCHMANN

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